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"CEASE TO BE FOOLS"

THE case of the *Daily Mirror* raises once more in an acute form, and at an untimely moment, the whole question of press censorship. The size of the offender, perhaps illogically, sharpens the uneasiness and annoyance of the champions of the press and swells their numbers; having so recently made peace with its critics, the Government sets us all by the ears again by making a frontal attack upon critcism. Mr. Morrison's threat to suppress the *Mirror*, like every action or threat of action by the Government against a newspaper, raises a very complicated question, complicated because the right answer can only be found by a judicious and judicial mixture of principle and expediency. And one must begin by admitting that it is extremely difficult for either the Government or the press to be judicious and judicial in these matters; the Minister and the editor are both prejudiced in opposite directions, for Gods, big or little, whether on Sinai, in Downing Street, or in Fleet Street, always become jealous Gods. Milton told the people of England that if they wished to remain free, they must immediately become wise, or (since he obviously thought that wisdom was most improbable) that they should "as soon as possible cease to be fools." The advice is as sound to-day as it was 300 years ago. If you read the *Mirror* and Mr. Morrison's speech about the *Mirror*, you will see that both Ministers and editors are in need of that advice; if they would only follow it, our liberties would not be threatened nor our war effort impeded by the folly of a too irresponsible press or of a too jealous Government.

Mr. Morrison's threat raised at once the whole principle of press censorship and freedom of speech and criticism in wartime. His statement, the criticisms of his critics, and the spate of comment, articles, and resolutions with which we have been deluged in the week which followed are full of appeals to principle. About the principle there is really nothing new to say which was not said 2,500 years ago by Pericles and 300 years ago by Milton. If we have not free speech, we are not free men. War does not alter that. If we are not allowed by the Government to say what we think, we are not fighting this war as free men, and it is highly improbable that we shall find ourselves to be free men at the end of it, even with victory. The press—as every dictator has shown—remains one of the most potent instruments of free speech. Allow the Government by a press censorship to prevent the newspapers from expressing independent opinion or criticism of the Government and you have gone nine-tenths of the way to the destruction of democracy and freedom.

But that, of course, is not the end of this matter of principle. In actual life the right to freedom can never be unqualified and absolute. So the principle of free speech is limited by the principle of the national safety in the middle of a war which the Government and many million people (not all of whom are wise) are fighting for existence. It is this principle of national safety to which Mr. Morrison appeals. Most people would agree that it is the right and duty of the Government to prevent anyone doing or saying things which are calculated seriously to endanger us in the struggle. "Systematically to spread a spirit of defeatism and to dissuade people from supporting the war effort," which is what Mr. Morrison charges the *Mirror* with, would certainly be acts endangering the national safety.

So the two principles, the one of free speech and the other of national safety, are or may be in conflict. That is why in any particular case of an alleged offence by a newspaper and of press censorship the question needs to be settled, as we remarked above, by a judicious mixture of principle and expediency. If all editors followed Milton's advice with regard to freedom, wisdom, and folly, they would be over-meticulous in censoring themselves, even, or particularly, when attacking the Government; they would limit their own freedom and compromise—which in the long run is the only way of preserving one's freedom and democracy. It is no easy thing to do this in war, day by day or week by week to preserve the independence of criticism and yet to limit it by the often delicate considerations of national safety. In the case of the *Mirror* an unbiased judge would probably hold that its wisdom has not been conspicuous, nor any effort that it may have made at self-censorship conspicuously successful. It has not learnt what it is wise to say or not to say at the crisis of a total war.

If the editor who desires to be free should in every particular case weigh the expediency of free speech against the expediency of silence, the Government and Ministers have a no less stern duty to compromise between the necessity of preserving a free press and the necessity of preserving the national morale. The Minister is just as much in need of self-censorship in a democracy as the editor. The wide uneasiness caused by the cases of the *Mirror* and the *Daily Worker* is due to a feeling, even among some of the Government's best friends, that this self-censorship is not being consistently exercised. All criticism of a government engaged on total warfare may easily be represented as impeding the war effort. It is the duty of the Government to distinguish legitimate criticism of themselves, which of course does in a sense impede *their* war effort, from criticism which would in fact seriously affect the national safety or seriously impair the total war effort. The duty is an exacting one. Ministers, like editors and Socrates, are human and liable to err; it is no easy thing for a Minister in war, day by day, to maintain his impartiality and not to mistake indignation at the Government's being criticised for indignation at the sabotage of the war effort. The continued suppression of the *Worker* and now the threat to suppress the *Mirror* are so disquieting because

they suggest that the confusion in the mind of Ministers may be becoming habitual, and that this might easily lead to an attempt to establish a governmentally controlled press. And our uneasiness is increased by the procedure adopted by the Government for dealing with these two papers, namely the use of a clause which allows out-of-hand suppression instead of one which requires that the case shall be tried judicially. The method of press censorship chosen should be used only in cases of extreme urgency or where the investigation of facts in public might endanger national safety. Neither contingency applies to the *Mirror*.

Family Allowances

There has been no better news for many a day than the announcement that the Executive of the Trades Union Congress has decided to give its support to family allowances. As far back as 1925 the I.L.P., then a powerful factor in Labour politics, declared for them and on its motion the Labour Party undertook to examine the idea. Its report was warmly favourable and Arthur Henderson was particularly keen, but the fear of some Trade Unionists that this reform would be used to drive wages down, or at least to check their rise, stopped any further progress. That barrier is now removed. The Executive of the T.U.C. wisely stipulates that the scheme must be non-contributory, that it must be universal and that there must be no means test. What is even more remarkable, the *Times*, in a leading article, not only backs the idea in principle, but accepts these conditions almost as a matter of course. Since the Liberal Party and most, if not all, the women's organisations in any way affected are also favourable, we believe that this reform could now be carried by general consent, or at least without formidable opposition. There is, to our thinking, no other reform commanding general assent which can compete with a generous scheme of family allowances as a means of raising the nation's standard of life. Children are to-day the chief cause of poverty. The State which has by legislation prolonged their years of dependence, and deferred the date when they can contribute to the family income, ought logically to shoulder the burden it imposes. We note a tendency to say that this change must come promptly after the war. On the contrary, the case for making it at once is overwhelming. At present men in the forces who have children in practice already enjoy family allowances on a moderate scale, while for others deductions from income tax make some comparable provision. To make this system universal would therefore be easier and cheaper than in time of peace. Moreover, when peace arrives, a demand of this sort will have to face the competition of other costly projects, notably the rebuilding of the devastated towns. If we mean to do it, let us do it now.

Home Front *(by Our Industrial Correspondent)*

The decision to set up Production Committees in all considerable factories engaged on war work has been taken at last; and discussions are now proceeding with the employers as well as the Trade Unions. The committees in privately owned factories will presumably follow the model of those already established in the Royal Ordnance Factories. They will be confined to methods of improving the quantity and quality of output. They will not be allowed to deal with wages or, generally, with matters which are covered by the procedures of normal collective bargaining. Nor will they take over the ordinary functions of shop stewards in handling workshop grievances. At least, in theory, they will do none of these things; and the ban on dealing with wages will probably be observed in practice. But in other matters it will be out of the question to draw a sharp line between questions of output and causes of workshop friction, even where these do touch on the functions of shop stewards and Trade Unions. The ballots by which the workers' representatives are to be chosen are to be managed by the Trade Unions, which will thus come directly into the working, as well as the inception, of the scheme; and it will be strange indeed if the result of the new machinery is not both to widen the range of collective bargaining under Trade Union auspices, and to change its character to some extent—with very large possible repercussions in the long run on the structure and working of Trade Unionism. It has long been an anomaly that in most Unions the branch, as the fundamental unit, has been based on the members' places of residence rather than on their places of work. The effect of setting up this new machinery will surely be to make the works organisation, rather than the branch, the essential driving force in local Trade Union activity. It may take some time for this tendency to work itself out; but its long-run consequence may well be a trade union movement very much better adjusted to modern conditions of production. Modern methods of factory control tend to raise far more problems than of old that need to be settled factory by factory, rather than over entire districts; and the Unions have long needed for this purpose effective instruments for workshop negotiation. Whatever limitations may be imposed at the start, I do not see how anything can stop the development of workshop negotiation in view of the manifest need for it, and the much closer link which it makes possible between the Union machine and the actual needs and desires of the rank and file members.

* * *

Mr. Lyttelton is apparently to be about as much Minister of Production as Lord Beaverbrook was to have been—neither less nor more. On paper, he seems to have been endowed with rather more power over the distribution of labour than his predecessor was to have enjoyed under the White Paper; but it remains to be seen how much practical difference this will make. Mr. Bevin remains responsible for the supply of labour: Mr. Lyttelton becomes responsible for its distribution. How far can this distinction be observed in practice, in view of the fact that labour is not an undifferentiated lump, but is of many different sorts and kinds? Which of them, for example, will have to argue with the War Office about the need for releasing coal miners to deal with the fuel shortage; and what will happen if Mr. Bevin's views about supply produce a labour force not composed in accordance with Mr. Lyttelton's views about the correct distribution? The answer, I presume, is that the two ministers will have to work such problems out together, and will have to carry their differences to the War Cabinet if they fail to agree. In this field, however, Mr. Bevin does seem to have given way a little; Mr. Lyttelton's speech in the House of Commons on Tuesday seems to indicate that there is to be a substantial improvement in the sheer mechanism of the co-ordination of war production, but that there is to be no real change in system. The control of the Ministries of Supply and Aircraft Production remains unchanged, Mr. Lyttelton having a general power of supervision over them but without any alteration in their essential character. His announcement that the powers of the Regional Boards are to be extended also seems to indicate no substantial change. As for Mr. Lyttelton's relations with the Ministry of Labour, these, as we have said, seem to show some improvement on what was laid down in the White Paper, but their effectiveness must depend on the personal ability of the two Ministers to work very closely together.

* * *

Fuel rationing, which is the next port of call for Sir William Beveridge in his odyssey of war muddles, is on the face of the matter a highly intractable problem. The ration must clearly cover alternative sources of heat; but how is it to be applied to gas and electricity? Are consumers who exceed to be simply cut off at the main? Moreover, what is to be the basis of the ration—pre-war household consumption, or floor-area or cubic space to be heated, or the number of persons in the household? The first of these would be very unfair on account of great changes in the numbers of persons living in particular houses; the second would be favourable to people with big houses, and the third to people with small houses. This may seem to point to the third as the best method; but what is to happen to centrally heated houses, in view of the fact that central heating plants simply go out if they are fed with a smaller quantity of fuel? These difficulties are put forward, not to suggest that rationing cannot be made to work, but only to indicate that Sir William Beveridge will need all his skill. He has not failed so far; and I fully expect he will score yet another success.

The Hungry Order

France, in peacetime, almost supplies herself with the main foodstuffs, and exports wine, fine cheeses, and fruits. Last year's wheat harvest was half as great again as that of 1940. But even the theoretic bread ration is down, and that is often unobtainable. The meat ration is a quarter of peacetime consumption. There are almost no potatoes. Where does the food go? Germany offers ample rations to French workers in Germany—especially potatoes. The farmers must reserve two-thirds of their milk for aviators in districts where the *Luftwaffe* has aerodromes, yet 90 per cent. of the children in a primary school in the free zone have been losing weight for six months. Vichy blames hoarding, over-consumption; above all, the blockade. Spain, in peacetime, imported some wheat, but otherwise fed herself. The civil war damaged her railways and irrigation works, and she had not re-stocked with good seed or imported manures to restore the exhausted soil when the world war broke out. But these facts do not account for the acute food shortage in Spain. The rations do not keep the poor alive; death from starvation is common. In Madrid 35,000 people are living off scraps from dustbins. Typhus and famine dropsy are epidemic. The rich can eat; for the black market is available for them. They can drink milk in a café in the Prado while gaunt children watch from the street. The true cause of the famine is the same. Germany is getting the stocks.

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BITTER-ENDERS

WHEN two Peers lay before the House of Lords a well-reasoned plan for prolonging this war to the bitterest possible end, they deserve the consideration of a much wider public. We concede at once that the means which Lord Vansittart and Lord Elibank recommended are admirably adapted to serve their purpose. Each of these gentlemen has a particular claim to our attention. Few men in the days of appeasement can have offered so many colonies to the Germans at the expense of so many other Powers as Lord Elibank did. Lord Vansittart, on the other hand, has cherished with unflinching consistency a resentment against the German rudeness which dates from his experiences as a student round about the Boer War. These are qualifications which equip both these Peers to perform to perfection the role they have chosen to fill.

They argued in this debate that in its propaganda to Germany the B.B.C. is employing the wrong kind of Germans and saying the wrong kind of things. Lord Elibank was frank enough to outline for us what should be said. He would play exclusively on the fears of the enemy by boasting of the overwhelming resources of the United Nations. We agree that this is a good and useful line to follow, and in fact the B.B.C. has devoted much time and thought to it. But there are limiting factors to be borne in mind to which neither of these critics referred. The first of them is that an audience on the air can be won only with difficulty. If the listener is bored or annoyed he will instantly switch off the current or try another station, and if he is frequently bored or annoyed, he may never try again. The German listener tunes in to London at the risk of the concentration camp, if not of the firing squad. The first business of the B.B.C. is, manifestly, then, to give him something of unique value and absorbing interest which he can get nowhere else. The rarest commodity on the air in Europe to-day is the truth. The chief duty of the B.B.C. is therefore to win and deserve a reputation for honesty and objectivity. It caters for highly critical consumers, who have every right, because of the risk they run, to be well served. Any matter that it mixes with its news to produce a psychological effect must conform to this general rule: it also must be truthful and it must be introduced with tact. To do bluntly what Lord Elibank suggests, and to do only or chiefly this, would soon result in depriving us of any listeners at all, save Dr. Goebbels's monitors, and they would lap up every word.

Lord Vansittart was less helpful in his criticisms, and we are not clear, on his reading of the facts, that propaganda to Germany could ever serve a useful purpose. He believes that

> the great bulk—not the whole but the great bulk—of the German nation—and please note, my Lords, I do not say race—has developed in the last three or four generations into a nation of fierce, organised and savage aggressors, bent on the total destruction of the people of this country.

How the great bulk of the German nation, not yet united in a single Reich, manifested that design a century ago, we are at a loss to guess. We recall that in *Black Record* Lord Vansittart swept away the whole of Germany's achievement in music, philosophy, science and technology with the dictum: "To mankind as a whole Germans have brought nothing but misery in all its worst forms." Such passages serve to warn us that he is not a scientific historian, but a man of strong and twisted emotions.

His advice, so far as we can follow it, was entirely negative. He objects to the kind of Germans who have been helping the B.B.C. "precisely because they are good Germans." By this paradox he means, we take it, that they are men who have some pride in Germany's past and some concern for her happiness, dignity and security in the future. For our own part, we should say that if they do not sincerely feel as good Germans should, their business as propagandists would be to pretend that they do. We have had some experience of the other kind of approach. For a while Lord Haw-Haw's insolence, the hatred and contempt evident in his every tone and phrase, was amusing and even tonic: but few listen to him to-day. Surely the only rational line of approach is to talk to the Germans, honestly and without flattery, about what was admirable in their past record and tradition and then to turn on the Nazis as the unworthy and de-civilised leaders of a revolt against morals, reason and civilisation, who have defiled and destroyed everything their nation prized. That may win the listener, whereas if you tell him that "the bulk" of Germans were always savages from Tacitus's day to our own, he is likely, unless he is a connoisseur of nonsense, to try another wavelength. It puzzles us that Lord Vansittart, whom we had mistaken for a Conservative, should complain that there was "no revolution" in 1918. A sweeping political revolution there was: but if it is a social revolution he hopes for this time, as we do, why does he attack Mr. Fraenkl for wanting what he calls "class-war"? Does he not wish that the German masses should depose the mighty from their seats—the Junkers and the barons of industry?

At this point we reach the substantial issue that divides us. Lord Vansittart's bitterest complaint against these "good Germans" is that they "plead for the retention" of their country's "heavy industry." We should be the first to insist that the future of German heavy industry is one of the keys to the whole problem of European security. It would not suffice to disarm Germany if she could use her immense industrial potential to re-arm at the first convenient opportunity. One plan assuredly would be to destroy the entire heavy industry of Ruhr and Rhineland, and even, if you wish to be thorough, to seal up the coal pits or most of them. It is presumably this, in some measure, that Lord Vansittart advocates. The first consequence would be to condemn many millions of German workers, who depend directly or indirectly on this industry for a livelihood, to everlasting unemployment. That is, we suggest, exactly the surest way of prolonging this war. Against such a fate even those German workers who loathe the Nazis must fight to the last ditch. We will not pause to enquire with what forces a Germany packed with this desperate population could be permanently held down, since we prefer to put the case positively. Here in these rich seams of coal, again in the powerful and ingenious engines that fill the workshops of this region of Germany, and, above all in the disciplined hands and trained minds of these engineers, chemists and technicians, are massed a great part of the riches of Europe. Is it proposed that we "retain" these riches for the common good, or that we destroy them? Adapt them to the uses of peace, and they can turn out tractors and looms, bridges and ships' plates, ploughs and irrigation pumps, which might in a decade transform all the conditions of life and work, first of all near at hand in the Balkans and Poland, and then farther afield in India, China and Africa. But might they not make tanks and guns? That is good reason for discussing the question of control and ownership, but hardly for proposing their destruction. But what motive would they have to make arms, if (with our own workshops and America's) they could be constantly employed in supplying the world's civilian needs? Half of mankind is condemned to a bare subsistence for lack of their tools. Let the reader imagine a broadcast talk on these lines. Let a German Socialist refugee speak it, in the broad accent of the Lower Rhine, basing himself on the promises of the Atlantic Charter, and we should hope, before long, on some declarations as authoritative but much more specific—what would the effect be? Surely to strengthen the longing for peace of every German who respects honest work and retains any memory of better days. It would begin to occur to him that life under such a New Order as this would be better worth living than under any system Hitler can promise him. The skilful propagandist would know how to combine the argument from fear with the appeal of hope. He would remind the German listener day by day in accurate and impressive detail that in man-power, raw materials and manufacturing capacity the United Nations dispose of unlimited resources. While he was building up a picture that must suggest the inevitable defeat of the Axis, he would sketch in as clearly the vision of a future based on the economics of abundance, in which Germans would enjoy their part with the rest of us. He would then make it clear that only Hitler and the barbarous Nazi regime stand in the way of this desirable future. We should not expect to reap the fruits of this propaganda until Germany's prospects of military victory stood a good deal lower than they do to-day. But with the first heavy defeats, when the Nazi machine of coercion began to stagger, it would sap the will of a rapidly growing number of workers and soldiers to fight on with their backs to the wall. At that stage resistance in the field will crumble and we may hope for a revolt first in the workshops and then in the ranks, against Nazi leadership. This is the line which our propaganda is, in fact, following. It could achieve more if the intentions of the United Nations, above all in the economic field, had been defined with greater precision. But the first condition of success, needless to say, is the demonstration by land, air and sea of our military power. The best tribute to the work of the B.B.C. is the fact that, week by week, at the peak hour for listening, Dr. Goebbels in person, and the "star" news-commentator Hans Fritzsche, answer it carefully, point by point.

But it would be ungenerous to refuse to Lord Vansittart the recognition he deserves. He is succeeding in building up the will of the Germans to resist to the last. His argument that from remote antiquity to the present day most Germans always were Nazis is in fact uniting them in a solid block under Adolf Hitler. Evidence of his success can be found on almost any day chosen at random. Here, for example, are the headlines of the daily paper *Angriff* on February 19th of this year. "The depression in London about the news from Burma: Another orgy of hate by Vansittart: English Secretary of State in league with the Bolsheviks." On the evening of the same day Hans Fritzsche said in his broadcast talk:

> Just as thunder follows lightning, so British defeats are accompanied by outbursts of British hatred. Quite recently the newspaper *John Bull* published details of a victory which Great Britain and her allies imagine they can dictate in Europe one day. While British propaganda is employing an army of German-speaking emigrants in order to impress the German people with the fact that England has no grudge against the German people, but only against the German Government, the newspaper *John Bull* revels in saying that on the day of the British victory the British Government in Berlin

will organise an international control of Germany. To-day we get confirmation of the British plan disclosed by *John Bull*, a confirmation from the lips of a man who must be in the know. This confirmation comes from Robert Vansittart, whose dark role in British foreign policy will certainly one day be elucidated by the investigation committee which the last Englishman will set up to ascertain the criminals who dragged Britain into war.

The surest way to prevent or delay the divisions that should one day lead to a revolt is to preach undiscriminating hatred of all Germans (or "the bulk" of Germans). Hitler's best card is to tell his dupes and his victims that in the hour of defeat they will all be annihilated together. We would pay our tribute, therefore, to the engineering skill with which Lord Vansittart is building a psychological Siegfried Line, which our men will one day have to breach at the cost of months of effort and thousands of young lives.

"EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE"

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If you want "equality of sacrifice" in time of war you might as well cry for the moon. A poor widow may lose her only son, the bread-winner, but a rich wife may have her ne'er-do-well husband returned to her bosom, safe and sound. A bomb may fall on a one-man shop and end the little shopkeeper's livelihood. Another may fall on a City leasehold and save a firm of stockbrokers from the ruin of an enormous rent.

And in a society which is unhappily distinguished by sharp inequalities of wealth in times of peace, there cannot even be equality of hardships in times of war. If you are a wealthy man you can still dine out in London every night and enjoy good food and wine without ration cards or sumptuary tax if you will pay the fantastic prices. If you are a rich woman—or have a "sugar daddy"—you can buy a beautiful fur coat at hundreds of guineas for the same number of clothing coupons (18) as the poor working girl has to surrender for a "utility" coat. What a poor joke for advertising agents to publicise coupon equality as "fair shares for all"!

Let us, then, stop discussing "equality of sacrifice" or "equality of hardship." In this imperfect, class-ridden society such beautiful ideals are unattainable. But the question of social justice is a real one, and it does vitally affect the public morale in time of war. What really offends us, if we think it out, is not inequality of sacrifice, but mal-distribution of economic loss.

First of all, there are glaring inequalities between the pay of workers in factories and the pay of soldiers, sailors and flying men who are in the battle. Why differentiate in total war, we ask, between the fighters for democracy? Why make any distinction in the money treatment of those called up to fight in the front line and those called up to fight at the factory benches?

In July, 1941, the Ministry of Labour made an analysis of the average wage earned by six million war workers. It came to nearly £5 a week. The biggest wage packet went to the men making aeroplanes and tanks. Their average was £6 7*s*. 5*d*. a week. No doubt they have risen since. I must not joke about Army pay because the Army Council do not like it. Besides, it has just been increased. The private soldier now gets 2*s*. 6*d*. a day cash (17*s*. 6*d*. a week) and 6*d*. a day deferred pay to be met on his discharge. This still seems to call for mirth on the music-hall stage, but to be fair to the Army Council you must reflect, if you are a bachelor, on the happier lot of a married soldier. To obtain allowances for wife and children, 3*s*. 6*d*. a week is now deducted (against 7*s*.) from the married man's pay. Then he can obtain 25*s*. a week for his wife, 8*s*. 6*d*. for the first child, 6*s*. 6*d*. for the second and 5*s*. for the third and each additional child. Thus, the cash resources of a private with wife and three children will be 59*s*. a week (against 41*s*. before the war). Not so bad as it was, but it still works out at a poor rate of pay by comparison with the industrial worker.

The owners of requisitioned property, on the whole, get better treatment than the owners of flesh and blood called up to fight, but they have, no doubt, their own grievances peculiar to themselves. The war has put relatively heavy losses upon the seaside landladies, the travel agencies, the City stockbrokers, the metal brokers, the shopkeepers in evacuation areas, and the restricted or prohibited trades which have had no compensating payments. These unfortunates are no more responsible for the war than anyone else, but they have suffered much more from it. The retail trades must necessarily be subjected to even more restriction—and some more severely than others—but no scheme of compensation has been devised which will enable them to benefit from the prosperity of, say, the munition trades. Even in the retail trade the small shopkeeper will be watching with the green eye of jealousy the custom which is being switched over to the chain stores on the other side of his street. Is it right that the large multiple shops, having plenty of ready cash, should buy up available stocks, secure first call on manufacturers' supplies and so snatch business away from the small trader? The Government is keeping in full and prosperous working order the large agglomerations of capital invested in iron and steel, railways, mines, chemical plant, engineering works and flour mills, but is leaving exposed to the economic blasts the small, one-man trading firms. Is the big vested interest to be the only form of wealth which is to suffer no irreplaceable destruction of itself in this war? The Government must find a satisfying answer to this question and find it quickly. I hope they will read the plan which I shall shortly lay before my fellow citizens in *Vested Interests or Common Pool*.

No doubt the ideal policy for total war would be to put everyone into Service uniform, to guarantee everyone an equal income, to call on everyone to fight or to do the work that is required and to decide or control what everyone should consume. That is the ideal and it is quite impracticable—from an administrative as well as from a sociological point of view. What is the next best policy? Should the Government try to maintain incomes in their pre-war relationship to each other? We agree it should try to avoid serious social displacements. It should prevent whole classes of traders from being arbitrarily pushed out of business or individuals from being singled out to suffer more than their fellows. But should it try to improve the pre-war economic position of labour as opposed to capital or that of the lower ranks of workers as compared with the higher? Before the war the inequalities in wealth were certainly extreme and disgusting. Should the State use its powers in total war to narrow extremes of wealth and to level classes in society?

The Government has already moved in that direction by taxing the rich more heavily. Indeed, it has done this so effectively that it has already destroyed the rich man's incentive to work. Leading barristers, for example, have found it cheaper to give up their highly lucrative practices and find humble Government or Service jobs where they can be comfortable and not overworked for the rest of the war. But while it is easy to soak the rich, it is impossible, in a time of war, to increase the real wages of the workers.

One of the economic consequences of total war, especially for an island nation, is that the edible national cake does not become larger with the extra work done in the factories. Indeed, shortages of raw materials, shortages of ships and shortages of labour must reduce the size of the cake as the war goes on. So the civilian workers as a whole cannot increase their consumption by increasing their wages. Of course, any individual with extra money in his pockets to spend can temporarily increase *his* share of the national consumption, but only at the expense of his neighbour's. As J. M. Keynes has said in *How to Pay for the War*: "... A demand on the part of the Trade Unions for an increase in money rates of wages to compensate for every increase in the cost of living is futile, and greatly to the disadvantage of the working class. Like the dog in the fable, they lose the substance in gaping at the shadow. ... Except as an effort at group selfishness, as a means of hustling someone else out of the queue, it is a mug's game to play."

Now the Trade Union Congress has demanded that the workers must receive a rise in basic wages to meet every rise in the cost of living—regardless of the weekly extras in the shape of overtime pay and bonuses. Of course, after the profiteering which our capitalists indulged in during the world war against the Kaiser, it is not surprising that our trade union leaders should now be trying to get their own back by "cashing in" on labour account in the world war against Hitler. After all, there might not be another war. So far they have secured a rise in basic wage rates of about 25 per cent. and in total weekly earnings of about 45 per cent.—against a rise in the cost of living of 30 per cent. Keynes pointed out in the same book: "If aggregate earnings at the existing wage-rates increase because of overtime and full employment, *a rise in basic wage rates sufficient to compensate for higher prices would set our national economy the impossible task of raising consumption above the pre-war level.*"

Whether the workers understand the economics of this war I do not know. The Trade Union leaders have never tried to explain it to them seriously. But I am sure no worker regards himself as a profiteer. He knows very well that his employers are meeting *their* extra cost of living by receiving bigger tax-free expenses from their companies—to the debit of Excess Profits Tax. He has probably noticed that the directors' standard of living—measured in entertainment, motor cars, food, drink, cigars and travelling—has gone up and not down. So why should he not bargain for bigger and bigger wages? The trouble is that he does not see that higher wages will only make the prices of uncontrolled goods or luxuries soar, the queues of would-be shoppers lengthen down the street and the black markets multiply and boom. There is, of course, one simple answer to all this folly. First, to expose, fine and imprison the dishonest tax-cheating capitalists and racketeers; secondly, to enlighten the workers as to the true economics of total war and get them to agree to the stabilisation of wages. It should be explained to them that they must accept the major part of their increase in wages in the shape of deferred pay or savings certificates, in other words, that they must not try to spend them. In the last war the capitalist profiteers accepted their increased share of the national wealth in the shape of War Bonds; in other words, national debt. They did not try to consume it all immediately. In this war, the workers can do the same; they can become part-owners of the new national debt.

NICHOLAS DAVENPORT

(To be continued)

IN A FRENCH INTERNMENT CAMP

[The authors of this article escaped from internment in France three weeks ago.]

An escort of Nazi troops marched us into the courtyard of the Besançon barracks on December 6, 1940. Our first impression of Caserne Vauban, three huge blocks with outhouses and offices built round a cinder court, and surrounded by high walls festooned with barbed wire, was peculiarly depressing. Two days before our arrival, some twenty thousand French and English prisoners of war, taken there from the Maginot line the previous June, had been transferred to Germany from the barracks. They had left behind them an indescribable chaos; the place was littered with old military coats, helmets, rusty tins and utensils of all sorts, and the floors and stairs were swimming in mud, all this in spite of heroic efforts to clean up the Augean stables by the hundred French soldiers who remained.

These were specialised workmen, kept on by the Germans to serve in the camp as plumbers, carpenters, cobblers and mechanics, and in the offices and stables, under German orders. When demobilised later, they were replaced by Senegalese. German officers directed the administration and we were guarded, of course, by German sentries in full battle dress. We made a point of talking to the Germans so as to discover their feelings and mentality, at the risk of being looked upon with disapproval as "Fifth Column" by other internees. We found that they were mostly men of petty bourgeois class—small farmers, clerks and shopkeepers. They were not members of the Nazi party, but were imbued with Goebbels's propaganda and profoundly ignorant of everything but what their radio and newspapers told them. Occasionally we met one who had glimmerings of doubt: "There is propaganda on both sides, *das wissen wir, ja alle*." And one or two did genuinely want to hear about life in England.

When war was declared on Russia they accepted Hitler's change of policy without question. "What our Führer says has always come true." They were very cock-a-hoop and keen to go off to the front, saying it would be over in a few weeks, and "our Führer knows what he is doing"; but, as reports came in of the Russian resistance, and the terrible slaughter on the Eastern front, they grew less enthusiastic. Very many of them had reports of friends or relatives killed, which brought home to them the true state of things.

Batches of men were sent off periodically, and the last lot, who went in November, were openly terrified. We saw them going off very inadequately clad in uniforms of very thin material, rabbit-skin gloves of poor quality, and belts with tin buckles stamped with the motto "*Gott mit uns*"! One or two of them actually wept when they left, and several of them had tried to raise their spirits by gin and whisky. One officer, who was unusually lucky, was sent back to our camp after three weeks in Russia, and gave an account of the Russian front, which he said was "hell let loose." Every civilian was armed and the Germans could trust nobody in the occupied villages. He had travelled all over the Ukraine and admitted that the communications between villages and collective farms, and the Soviet organisation in general, had been excellent—a high tribute from a Nazi officer.

Often Germans showed us photos of their families, from whom they had been separated for years. Some of them had been through the campaigns of Belgium, Norway, and even Spain, and said they were sick of war.

Our camp presented an extraordinary mixture of people: old men, women and children. A very small minority, like ourselves, were 100 per cent. British; the majority consisted of wives, widows and divorcees of Englishmen. There were Russians, Italians, Spaniards and almost every other nationality. There were women who happened to have been born somewhere in the British Empire. There were 18 different orders of nuns, mostly French Canadians; there were jockeys, bargees and University professors. In our room we had a typical selection: a Russian girl born in Jaffa; a Polish woman born in London; and a negro girl from Nigeria. They thought their internment as Englishwomen very unjust, and made every possible "démarche" to get out—in vain.

In Besançon our life consisted of a series of "corvées," queuing up for coal, wood, water and food, carrying pails of dirty water, and peeling rotten and frozen potatoes in a draughty shed. We elected a committee among ourselves to present grievances to the Kommandant and to get conditions improved. The Committee also organised cleaning squads, arranged classes and ran outdoor games. Netball matches, volley ball, even folk dancing flourished, in spite of the unfavourable conditions—the black cinder-covered courtyard of the barracks served as our only playing field.

When we discovered the barracks library we rushed to it, but found that most of the books were musty old military histories. Luckily books were sent in to us, and though the censor severely withheld anything deemed doubtful or dangerous (the *Golden Treasury* and books on modern painting included), we soon had a passable collection, ranging from *The Brothers Karamazov* to *Bulldog Drummond*. When we were transferred to Vittel, things were better, decent beds with sheets, baths, and a park were greeted as things of another world. The food, though more cleanly cooked at Vittel, was equally monotonous in both camps—the midday mush of parsnips or potatoes, with meat on festive occasions, the evening spoonful of Kunstmarmelade (beetroot jam) or *ersatz* cheese (a lurid product squeezed out of a tube).

We depended almost entirely on the weekly Red Cross parcels full of food from England. These were a subject of envy to the hungry French workmen who came to the camp from the village, and of disgust to the German authorities, who had done their best to convince us that Britain was being starved into surrender. Swopping tins and bartering cigarettes for jam, biscuits for sardines, became a regular business and an absorbing distraction for many internees, who found very little else to think about or do in the camp.

In Vittel, where "corvées" were reduced to a minimum, the lack of occupation, coupled with captivity and the strain of separation, seriously affected people morally and emotionally. Yet there were fewer nervous crises than might have been expected. Internees found escape in various directions. Spiritualism, fortune-telling and thought-reading became extremely popular, people staying up all night to receive "messages," in which they apparently firmly believed.

Others turned to religion, and the nuns found a fertile ground for conversion among the younger women, some 40 of whom became Roman Catholic during the first months of internment. The nuns were also very active in organising a school and study circles, and staging religious plays.

Our own weekly concerts were a great diversion and always packed out. We had at our disposal talent ranging from classical pianists to acrobatic dancers and girls from the Folies Bergère. Shows were of an international character; and the programme of the last one before our escape consisted of Russian, Polish and Palestinian songs and dances organised by a young Russian Jewess. We half expected the Nazi authorities to object and censor the show—Mendelssohn's music, by the way, was forbidden—but, on the contrary, German officers (some of whom came a long way to attend our concerts) and the Kommandant of the camp enthusiastically applauded and asked for the dancing to be repeated. We obtained permission to have a fête in the camp on July 14, although elsewhere it had been forbidden both by the Germans and Vichy to celebrate the annual holiday. This fell through owing to a petition from certain internees in the camp who supported Pétain's view that this was "*une journée de deuil*" for France.

Unfortunately such divisions of opinion were frequent and inevitably there were quarrels among the 2,000 internees. But on the whole the spirit of the camp was friendly; we grew accustomed to discounting the unfounded and sometimes fantastic rumours circulated freely by wishful thinkers. On the one hand, optimists would tell us that the British had landed in France and that we should be free in a month, while pessimists would spread tales of overwhelming Nazi victories, and of our forthcoming transfer to Germany. We waited patiently for real news, which occasionally trickled in and stimulated us enormously. For us personally the good news of Allied successes was perhaps the best antidote to the depression and monotony of our eleven months' internment.

Frida Stewart
Rosemary Say

THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS GLANDS

It is now common knowledge that the human individual is an integrated conglomerate of millions of minute living organisms; the direct descendants of one microscopic cell which, by repeated division and differentiation, has developed into that collection of muscles, bones, glands and other tissues which we speak of as the body of man. What about the mind of man? Is that also made up of millions of units of which few of us have yet formed a complete picture? Obviously, there must be co-ordination and control.

There is a further problem. We think of ourselves as terrestrial animals, capable of adapting ourselves to the most varied external circumstances; thriving nearly all the way from the equator to the poles, and living on foods of the most varied kinds. But the living cells of which we—or, at any rate our bodies—are composed, are water animals, very unadaptable, needing for their continued existence an environment constant within very narrow limits. "It is the fixity of the *milieu intérieur* which is the condition of free and independent life; and all the vital mechanisms, however varied they may be, have only one object, that of preserving constant the conditions of life in the interior environment." Justly did J. S. Haldane say that "no more pregnant sentence than this of Claud Bernard was ever framed by a physiologist." In the Tropics and in the Arctic Circle the temperature of the blood is practically the same; so, also, are its salinity and its physical and chemical constitution.

Long before the functions of the endocrine secretions were suspected, it was known that communication between different parts of the body was conducted by means of a nervous system. It was further realised that these nerves were of two kinds, connecting our central nervous organs with two different kinds of muscles. Over one set, our conscious mind and will obviously have a good deal of control: over the other, it

seemed to have very little or none. When we wish to raise a glass to our lips, we can clearly do so; when we wish our heart to beat more quickly or more slowly, we seem to have no such direct power.

Since the middle of the last century, physiologists have realised that, in addition to these telephone or nerve services, we are furnished with an internal chemical service which, though slower and less precise in its working, is yet of very great importance. When the fragrance of the frying bacon reaches our nostrils, hurried messages are sent along the appropriate nerves to our digestive glands in the mouth and stomach to get ready for action. But, when the partly digested chyme leaves our stomach and enters the first part of the intestine, a substance called secretin is produced in the lining membrane of the food canal and is absorbed into the bloodstream. In a short time, some of this secretin is thus carried to the pancreas, which it stimulates into activity, even if its nerve connection be cut, so that a flow of pancreatic juice is poured into the intestine in time to complete the digestive work begun in the stomach. This illustrates the method of sending news and instructions from one part of the body to another by chemical messenger. Though not itself what we now call an endocrine product, the hormone secretin may serve as an example of those recently discovered substances which, in this way, help to integrate and to harmonise the activities of our several parts.

The organs which we now know to produce hormones are the pituitary, the adrenals, the thyroid and parathyroid, the pancreas, the stomach and intestines, the testes and the ovaries. It is with these hormones that Dr. Hoskins' excellent, well-written and—especially notable to-day—beautifully produced book* is concerned. The author is the Director of Neuro-Endocrine Research at Harvard. In language easily understood by the non-technical educated reader, he tells the story of the various endocrine glands and their secretions, distinguishing clearly between possibilities and established facts; and discusses the philosophic problems raised and the endocrinology of the future. "The problem that is ever with us," he says, "and toward the solution of which progress is but slow, is that of the *control of the endocrine glands*. The hormones largely regulate the body, but what regulates the regulators? Most significantly, we know that the glands of most people most of the time are by one agency or another kept in a suitable state of activity or quiescence. By and large, however, our knowledge of the control of hormone secretion is in a fragmentary state."

The hormone secretions, potent as they are, are present in the body in only the minutest quantity. It is estimated that the amount of thyroxin circulating in the bloodstream at any one time is not more than one-fourth of a grain. We use no more than three-and-a-half grains in an entire year. Yet even in these infinitesimal amounts, the hormones exercise enormous influence. As Dr. Hoskins says, "a baby born without thyroid tissue is a misshapen, drooling object with protruding tongue and abdomen, who never, of his own resources, becomes more than a stunted bandy-legged imbecile." Lack of one of the pituitary hormones produces dwarfism and sexual infantilism, whilst a deficiency of insulin spells diabetes. The potency of these secretions may be judged from the fact that one part in four hundred million of adrenalin in the bloodstream produces a recognisable effect. This dilution is that which would result from the addition of one ounce of a given substance to the contents of ten thousand water tanks, each holding six hundred and twenty-five gallons. As Dr. Hoskins tells us, "it is only in our time that the permeating influence of the hormones in the life-processes of every cell has become apparent. Physiology without the hormones is not physiology at all. Since pathology is but physiology out of balance, an extension of the generalisation is warranted—pathology without the hormones is likewise incomplete pathology."

Dr. Hoskins ends his book on a modest note—a note characteristic of the utterances of nearly all physiologists of repute in the last few decades. Fourteen years ago, Professor Lovatt Evans said at a meeting of the British Association: "Physiochemical theory enables us to link up some of the phenomena of life with phenomena in the non-living, and so to describe them in terms we think we understand better. But let us be under no illusion about finding explanations; or finding what life is, by this or other methods." And here is Dr. Hoskins: "Medical and biological investigation has as its ultimate goal the improvement of health and happiness. Of the various aspects of biology, the study of the hormones is particularly attractive because of the applicability of its advances. It must be recognised, however, that application now lags well behind research in many parts of the field. Endocrinology has already contributed much to human welfare. The promise of other far-reaching contributions is bright."

HARRY ROBERTS

*Endocrinology. By R. G. Hoskins. *Kegan Paul*. 18*s*.

A LONDON DIARY

THE speakers at Warship Week ceremonies all over the country are tending to use their platforms for attacking policies and persons they disapprove of. As they are predominantly to-day military or naval gentlemen or "members of the governing classes," the attack is almost invariably against the Left. The League of Nations is one of their most favourite targets of abuse. The usual line is that, owing to our adherence to the League, we alone of European nations "set an example" by disarming, and that now we are suffering for it. These Conservatives ignore the fact that during the years when we are alleged to have disarmed, a Conservative Government, led by Mr. Baldwin and later by Mr. Chamberlain, was in power, with overwhelming majorities, and refused to treat the League seriously. I went myself to the opening of the Warship Week in my village last Saturday. A Commander in the Royal Navy told us that we were disarmed owing to the League; a Colonel told us that it was one of the principles of democracy that people should not be taxed above a certain amount. These were the reasons given to us why it was our duty to contribute our pounds, shillings and pence for providing torpedoes.

* * *

I hear from Eire that Harold Nicolson's lecture to an Irish Catholic Nationalist audience at University College, Dublin, which is by tradition highly critical of Britain, was a brilliant success. Members of the audience have told me that no speech made by an Englishman to Irishmen could have been more succcessful for its purpose and that a blimpish speech would have had the worst possible effect. As it was, a Nationalist, after listening to the speech, said that it was the best statement of the British case he had heard since the war started. Criticism of the lecture as defeatist is simply misinformed and is probably due to malicious or incompetent reporting in certain papers. Mr. Nicolson certainly said that "the lion's tail has been twisted; only two hairs left," etc., but this was a preface to a strong statement that Britain would win through, and be at the end of the war, after victory, "a poorer but nicer animal." He was defeatist only if it is defeatism to say that Britain, not the old imperialism, will win this war.

* * *

I am deeply sorry to see that Raymond Alderson has been killed in the Near East. He was a splendid young man, handsome, gay, capable. He was a frequent contributor to this journal; he had Quaker views, and after some hesitation volunteered for the Friends' Ambulance Unit. Then I saw him one day just ready to start with an ambulance group for Finland, but that war ended too soon and he became part of the unit organised by Mrs. Spears in the Middle East. I have here a long letter he wrote me three months ago. He was much upset about the report that this journal might be cut down because of paper shortage, he dwelt on its value to isolated men who wanted to understand what was happening, and he described the exasperation he found among his colleagues and amongst the troops at the uncritical, heavily censored "everything's for the best" stuff that was dished out for them as propaganda. Then he started analysing the Jewish-Arab question and ended up with an account of the work of the F.A.U. in which he was engaged:

> After a brief but bloody campaign we are settled by the sea, working fairly hardly and I have been fortunate enough to start medical relief work inland where it is most badly needed, and more recently been allowed to use our semi-official transport for wheat distribution, which is helping to solve an acute problem. The relief work takes the form of mobile medical clinics which serve a series of villages, perhaps 20 miles apart, where the natives can come in on the same day each week and be treated by doctors we are paying, and sent to hospital if need be. Mrs. Spears has got us a grant for the work and we have reached the stage of calculating the index of poverty, working with the American University.

Considering the large number of the contributors to this journal in the armed forces, it is rather curious that the first to be killed on active service should be a Conscientious Objector.

* * *

The threatened ban on the *Daily Mirror* and the widespread agitation over the continued ban on the *Daily Worker* have set people thinking harder and asking more questions about the nature and basis of our press than at any time since Northcliffe's famous attack on Lord Kitchener. (Curious that the first big individual "Press-King" to be threatened in this war should be the nephew of the man whose paper was publicly burned on the Stock Exchange for exposing the early military leadership of the last one.) I have always thought Hamilton Fyfe's "Life" of Northcliffe particularly illuminating of the character of the modern British press. For Fyfe showed very clearly how Northcliffe deliberately "tapped" a reservoir of readers who, he calculated, must theoretically have been created by the Education Acts of a couple of decades before, and were as yet not catered for by the unchanged and unchanging press as he found it in the early nineties. Northcliffe created a press which appealed to the rising lower middle class of his day—and the "popular" British press went on trying to extend and elaborate the Northcliffe appeal, with as little regard to basic social changes as Northcliffe's "traditionally-minded" predecessors had had before he put the cat among the pigeons.

* * *

Even in wartime you can buy a lot of things with £8,500: a country house, with ten bedrooms and four maids' rooms in the Quorn country; a pub, "with select clientele" in a selecter suburb; a directorship in one of the minor armaments firms . . . you can even give the Government the money and know that you've run the war for almost a minute. But for £8,500 well spent I've rarely seen anything to approach Islington's new Information Centre for Homeless Persons, officially opened the other day. The Centre, built on the site of a bombed store, has

been set up in the light of experience gained from the raids of 1940, when, in some towns, raid victims, tired and hungry after a night of terror, had to spend weary hours tramping from official department to official department before their many wants could be met. Islington is determined that this sort of thing shall not happen there. Raid victims going to the Centre will first be interviewed by girls specially chosen and specially trained. At one counter they will be given money to carry on. The rehousing officer will be there to see to their accommodation; they will be able to get travel vouchers; arrange for the removal and storage of furniture. One department will deal with applications for extensions of leave for Servicemen whose homes may have been bombed; another will arrange evacuations; another deal with lost ration books, identity cards and gas masks; there will be free legal advice. The Centre will seat 450 people; there is central heating; canteens will provide free hot drinks; washing facilities; a play pen for the children.

* * *

Wilson Steer was a man possessed by one idea—to paint as well as in him lay, irrespective of public taste or honours or polemics. Working always, perhaps too cautiously, within the limits of his imaginative powers, he developed, to express his delicate sensibility, an eclectic style derived from the Impressionists, from Gainsborough and Constable, and from the French Masters of the eighteenth century. Of a Royal Academy that even pretended to care for tradition, he would have been the most venerated member. That he quietly disregarded this institution is the most damning indictment one could bring. It is gratifying, on the other hand, that the monarch recognised his distinction by giving him the Order of Merit. As far as I know, he never wrote, but George Moore's *Conversations in Ebury Street* will give posterity a vivid, typically malicious, appreciation of his character. "We all strive towards oneness," was Moore's verdict, "but only Steer has attained it."

POLYCRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to John Hanson.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The use of petrol by officials of Southend Corporation was discussed at yesterday's council meeting. The Mayor, Ald. William Miles, who lives at Harpenden, Herts, was asked if he had seen a report in the *Daily Telegraph* that the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Laurie, used buses while on official duty.

The Mayor replied: "If you want me to continue as Mayor I want a car to go about in. I saw the announcement about the Lord Mayor of London and was not very impressed by it. There is such a thing as dignity of office."—*Daily Telegraph.*

Mr. E. A. W. Parsons, of the Malvern Field Club, has exploded the legend of Lady Godiva of Coventry. He says: "The idea of a proud Saxon thane allowing his lady to lower the dignity of his race is absurd." He asserts that the story of riding a horse naked is a mere play with words, and refers to the fact that the lady rode the animal "naked"—that is, without saddle or bridle.—*Sunday Express.*

New orders have been sent round the B.B.C. Among them is one forbidding drink to be mentioned.

Hence, items such as "What shall we do with the drunken sailor?" and "Here's to good old whiskey" will be barred from shanties or students' songs.—*News Chronicle.*

After all, Great Britain is still a democratic country. A few days ago I noticed a well-known peer of the realm standing in a cake queue outside a confectioner's shop in the centre of Bath.—*Bath Weekly Chronicle and Herald.*

FREEDOM IS IN PERIL

(After Rudyard Kipling.)

"We are fighting the battle of freedom in the world against great odds. Do not add to these odds by deeds which cast a doubt on the sincerity of our aims."—LLOYD GEORGE. March 24.

WHEN the last newspaper is printed and the ink is faded and dried,
And the oldest critic is muzzled and the youngest croaker has died,
We shall pass to a tranquil era of government by decree,
When every voice shall be silenced but the voice of the B.B.C.

We shall hearken to Government spokesmen, we shall listen to Government news;
And no one will doubt or question, and none shall express their views.
And only the good shall be favoured, and only the killjoy shall fall,
And the murmur of opposition will never be heard at all.

And only the Leader shall praise us and only the Leader shall blame,
And Parliament will be sitting, our Parliament will be tame.
And the star of freedom will vanish; we shall steer by the Fascist star,
And no one will then remember the sort of people we are.

SAGITTARIUS

FIRE

THERE is usually something to be thankful for. I realised this anew when I read that coal is to be rationed and thought how grateful we should be that the rationing did not take place during the abominable snowman's winter we have just experienced. It is said that even the Russian delegates who came here, accustomed though they are to low thermometers, complained of the bitter coldness of the English climate, and we natives of the islands could not have got through the bleak months without extreme misery had it not been for the abundance of coal that turns winter into summer in palace and cottage even when the waterbutt has a surface of ice a foot thick.

The sun itself is not more necessary to us than coal. We can do at a pinch with very little sunlight if coal is plentiful; but not even sunshine outside can turn a cold day in a dark house with an empty grate into a demi-Paradise. On how many days in the year do we depend on coal for our happiness! To make a happy fireside clime for weans and wife would, without coal, be impossible. Wood is an excellent substitute if the chimney does not smoke; but in the ordinary house coal and its products are the source of warmth that makes our igloos endurable, and without them we could not so much as boil an egg or make a cup of tea. Coal, like liberty, is something that we appreciate at its true worth only when we are deprived of it. When it is abundant we take it for granted, like drinking-water. We may have a better chance of realising what a precious thing it is next winter.

Most of us—such is our indifference—could not even answer the question, "What is coal?" if it were put to us. I wonder whether all members of the Brains Trust could answer it. Struck by the fact of my ignorance, I opened a volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and read: "By coal is comprehended all the fossil fuels contained in the earth's crust. Being an amorphous substance of variable composition, it cannot be as strictly defined as can a crystallised or definite mineral. Coal, strictly speaking, is not a mineral but a rock, and further it is a sedimentary rock; the mineral substance, consisting mainly of complex carbon compounds, is amorphous." That, I confess, did not greatly enlighten me. It left me uncertain whether what I had been told in my childhood was true—that coal is made from dead trees that have gone rotten to the great profit of mankind.

As for the history of coal, I was equally ignorant of that—more ignorant than I was, for example, of the history of tea, coffee, or tobacco. I knew, at least, that the ancient European civilisations used none of these things; but what part, if any, coal played in their lives was beyond my power to say. Obviously, if the translation of the Old Testament is accurate, the use of coal is of great antiquity, for there we find the sentence: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and, if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." I cannot help wondering what King Solomon had in his mind when he invented this extraordinary image. To heap live coals of the English sort even on an enemy's head would be an offence likely to bring the perpetrator into a police court. Most proverbial phrases have some relation to the facts of life: one can see, for example, what is meant by a man's carrying coals to Newcastle; but has anyone, ever since the world began, heaped coals of fire on the head of another human being? Probably I am only exposing another reach of my ignorance in asking the question.

It is not only in the Old Testament, however, that we find evidence of the early use of coal. There is evidence that its use was known in this island even in the days of woad. This is proved, according to the *Encyclopædia*, by the fact that "it's appellation at the present time is not Saxon but British, and subsists among the Irish as *gual*, among the Cornish as *kolan*, and in Welsh as *glo* to this day." It is only right to add that the *New English Dictionary* says nothing in support of this derivation and finds plenty of Germanic affinities for the word "coal." Whatever the origin of the word, the use of the thing itself can be traced back in England to the ninth century. "The first record of the use of coal in Great Britain," says one authority, "is frequently stated to be in A.D. 852, when it is recorded, in the Saxon Chronicle, of the Abbey of Peterborough that the Abbot Ceobred let the land of Sempringham to Wulfred, who was to send each year to the monastery '60 loads of wood, 12 loads of coal, 6 loads of peat, etc.'" If there is any gratitude in human breasts, Englishmen will in two years' time be celebrating the eleventh centenary of that historic occasion.

Ruskin used to become indignant at the statement that England's greatness was based on coal, holding that national greatness could be ultimately based only on character. Whether England's greatness is based on coal or not, however, England's happiness to a large extent indubitably is. Even the happiness of English cats is based on coal. You can measure the cheerfulness of any house by the liberality with which the heads of the family heap coals on the fire. There may be occasions, as at present, when economy is a virtue; but they are not joyous occasions. In

normal years—if years of peace can in this perpetually surprising world be described as normal—a generous coal fire is the mark and symbol of a generous spirit. Christmas and not Midsummer is the season of generosity, and this is largely due to the blaze of coal in our grates.

It will, I fancy, puzzle posterity to explain how during all these generations we showed so little gratitude to the men who went into the bowels of the earth to provide us with this noble *ersatz* sunstuff. From a rational point of view the miners are, above all, the men who, because of their benefactions to us, should have been created dukes and earls and barons, and loaded with all the honours in our power to give. These are the Prometheuses of our time, bringing fire, not from Heaven, it is true, but from one particular star in the heavens. Yet we have housed them almost as uncomfortably as Prometheus on his rock, and Prometheus had at least a noble landscape to look out on. And we have grudged them even those pleasures which for ourselves we regard as necessaries. During a miners' strike, at the beginning of the century, hostile newspapers were filled with stories of overpaid miners who drank champagne and had grand pianos in their homes, as though it were not a fact that, if anyone had the right, because of his services to his fellows, to drink champagne and possess a grand piano, the miner had. Such men should dwell in palaces.

It is possible that the need for coal will one day disappear and that we shall obtain our heat and light by other means. Only a few years ago, indeed, many people were seriously agitated over the declining use of coal and its displacement by petrol and other things. A day may come when, in the name of civic cleanliness, we may be forbidden to burn coal in our grates and left only with those second-rate substitutes for the open fire—gas, electricity and central heating. Even then, however, we shall still remain indebted to coal and be the beneficiaries of the miner. While the calling still exists, I suggest that some modern poet should celebrate the miner in an epic as Maurice Hewlett celebrated the agricultural labourer in *The Hodgiad*. There is more poetry in coal than the poets seem yet to have thought of. There are both an *Inferno* and a *Paradiso* waiting to be written about it. Perhaps the coming months will sharpen our sense of its black-diamond preciousness. Meanwhile, as I have said, we have one thing to be grateful for—that during the early part of 1942 the coal-cellar was full, and that in one respect at least things might have been a great deal worse.

Y. Y.

PAINTING AND HUMANISM

With commendable enterprise an exhibition of "New Movements in Art" has been arranged in the London Museum. The organisers of the exhibition have confined their choice to the most experimental sorts of recent painting and sculpture: they have excluded not only the older generation of Post-Impressionists (Matthew Smith, Duncan Grant, Gertler) but the young Euston Road revivalists of realism (Coldstream, Gowing, Rogers). The result is a most arresting contrast between the exhibits and the massively embellished saloons in which they are enshrined, a contrast that tempts one to discuss tendencies and neglect individuals.

The most foolish, and the most usual, fault of critics is to praise or blame a work according to the school to which it belongs instead of according to its intrinsic value. Some styles, it is true, are based upon aims so erroneous as to overwhelm any virtues with which the artist may have been born. The architects of the French Renaissance, for instance, employed a language that they did not understand (the idiom of Italian Classic) to gratify their employers' passion for ostentation; and similarly to-day our Royal Academicians, with very few exceptions, neglect the whole tradition of painting from Giotto to Renoir, and produce vulgarly flattering representations of persons and places gratifying only to a public that neither knows nor cares about art. (Swing music, I suspect, is almost equally unworthy of attention, and so, I am sure, is most of the applied art we see in the furniture and china shops.) Nevertheless, the first business of the critic is to discern not between schools but between particular works. To condemn or applaud a painting because it is Impressionist or Cubist displays the mere lethargy of prejudice. The function of a work of art is to excite a particular and valuable emotion or state of mind, just as the function of a locomotive is to move a train, and the success with which it fulfils this function is the one valid criterion. But works of art do also possess a historical or sociological interest, which is a reasonable (if too frequent) subject for discussion; and this exhibition tempts the critic to consider the effect upon the artist of the current situation.

The artists represented can be divided into three categories, which may be called the Abstractionists, the Surrealists and the Neo-romantics. The first of these groups (e.g., Mondrian, Gabo, Ben Nicholson) carry to its extreme the tendency to order that is revealed in all good art. Their works, whether in two or three dimensions, resemble geometrical diagrams, and the sensibility of the artist, traditionally shown in the play of his drawing and his brushwork, is confined to the disposition of forms. This type of art, which has an evident connection with what is inaccurately termed "functional" architecture, can be considered inhuman, but in fact springs from a specifically human impulse to deny the animal in man and to exalt the intellect. (I believe the desire for order or perfection to lie deep—if often dormant—in the heart.) It is a form of art that should appeal to Mr. H. G. Wells and to Mrs. Sidney Webb, to all Utopists, all enthusiasts for scientific planning. It reduces, without entirely abolishing, the differences of individual temperament. It is puritanical and hygienic. In a world of waste, wickedness and idiocy it is a protest and the expression of a particular hope or ideal.

The Surrealists (who incidentally, I fear, show much less gift) go to the opposite pole, carrying to its extreme the tendency to sensuousness that most good art reveals. But, since unlimited indulgence of the senses is in life repulsive alike as a spectacle and as an experience, pictures of this sort are apt to be not only disquieting but distressing. (Indeed, I am not sure that the Surrealist is aesthetically any better than the commercial gent from Burlington House, since I believe art must contain an element of order.) Such works presumably appeal to the nihilist and to the theorist who believes that man is most interesting, most himself, when under the influence of alcohol, drugs or mania. Alternatively, Surrealism is the most misanthropic form of satire upon what man has made of the world. In any case it is the expression of a general and comprehensible despair at life as it is.

The third school, which I tentatively call the Neo-romantic, includes artists so diverse and remarkable as Frances Hodgkins, Graham Sutherland, and Ivon Hitchens (whose pictures now at the Leicester Galleries demand separate consideration). Henry Moore, despite his preoccupation with the human figure and his debt to the Italian Masters, is akin to them as a visionary. This school is closer than either of the others to the general tradition of art, because it admits the claims alike of the intellect and the senses, the impulse to order and the impulse to individual expression. Nevertheless its exponents are more capricious and less concerned with rationalising the world of phenomena than most artists in the past have been: they are in revolt against the European tradition of humanism. The appeal of their art, I fancy, is to mystics and particularly to pantheists who feel a fraternity, or even a unity, with all living things, to those with the "sense sublime Of something far more deeply interfused." Their work can be considered the expression of an identification with nature.

Each of these schools, it will be noted, refuses all concession to the ordinary man or even to the cultivated man, though the latter may have imaginative strength enough to enjoy their work. In their disparate ways all these artists avert their eyes from and thus condemn the civilisation we now see in the apparent process of collapse, the civilisation that produced the pomps of Stafford House in its last outburst of human pride. They must not, I repeat, be taken as representing all that is alive or promising in our current art. It may be, indeed, that they have responded too sensitively to the blast that is agitating our civilisation, a blast that may not be mortal. Humanism in the widest sense, which includes Dante as well as Shakespeare, Milton as well as Montaigne, seems to me the climate incomparably the most favourable to visual art. Are we on the eve of a new glacial age, one wonders, or have the artists taken fright at an uncommonly sharp winter? The question is not settled, but it is being pressed upon us by others besides artists.

Raymond Mortimer

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Blossom Time," at the Lyric Theatre.

Vienna in 1826, the Vienna that sang Schubert and danced Schubert everywhere through the houses and down the streets. The play is no more than a pretty setting in which Mr. Tauber can sing Schubert's songs. Some of the staging might indeed be called "pretty pretty." But the lovely melodies of Schubert are well matched by the singer's voice. Some will find Mr. Tauber's singing over-romantic, and one needs to be a trifle sentimental to enjoy oneself wholeheartedly at *Blossom Time*. But if one is looking for escape here it is. There seems no reason why this play, which makes no excessive demands of any sort and which is always agreeable, should not run as long as its predecessor, *Lilac Time*. Mr. Tauber is really a most engaging Schubert, and among the other members of the cast Leueen MacGrath, Margaret Yarde and Hella Kurty are particularly successful.

THE MOVIES

"Ball of Fire," at the Gaumont.

"H. M. Pulham, Esq.," at the Empire.

The idea of *Ball of Fire* is so delicious that one expects every moment of this enjoyable film to be just a little better than it ever is. A cluster of fogeys at work on a new encyclopædia, their investigation of Brains Trust questions and dance rhythms, the intrusion of Slang (Amer. Lit.) in the form of a strip-tease dancer and her gangster friends: the idea is worthy of Guitry or Preston Sturges. *Ball of Fire*, directed by Howard Hawks, doesn't quite live up to it; Gary Cooper as the youngest of the professors supplies defenceless honesty, states a case charmingly, falls in love and into a mess—but he has done it before; and Barbara Stanwyck and the wide boys don't sweep us off our feet as they might. Still, it's a diverting piece with slangy bits and a final show-down in the library between gangsters and professors when the ambling humour of the film is whipped into fantasy. Oscar Homolka gives a perfect minor performance as a bushy-browed sentimental elder.

H. M. Pulham, Esq., also falls a little short, perhaps, in execution. The theme—that parents hang on to their children like jellyfish, and the more the riches the stronger the suction—is an interesting one, more than competently treated by King Vidor. The flashback method gives us a life without too many tableaux. The hero (Robert Young) returns as a young man from the war, rather backward and ready to take his old place in the family, but energetic friends sweep him into advertising. The conflict—Robert Young is appealingly wooden and human by turns—develops entertainingly, with an undertow of drama. There are some very gay scenes of the advertising world and of falling in love—with Hedy Lamarr. Hedy Lamarr as a brisk business girl, flowering into the ample dresses of the period (early 'twenties), isn't so bad as one might fear; but, robbed of her jungle, she's a tame little thing. That is one fault. Another is the snooty parents, whose sentimental blackmail of their son is convincing, but whose gestures and words come fatally from stock. There are, too, unevennesses of treatment, and some parts of the story are seen with too rakish a satire, while others are sugar-coated with stage convention. One guesses at a better and more subtle novel behind the script of *H. M. Pulham, Esq.* But the film holds out well, and the extra half-hour of length is justified.

William Whitebait

Correspondence

PRODUCTION

SIR,—Further analysis is necessary to find reasons for the failure to maintain production to programme in the past. I suggest that the real reason for failure lies in the technique adopted, and I venture to put forward some suggestions as to why this has been the case.

In the first place our whole conception of the productive problem has been too niggardly. We have thought in tens when we ought to have been thinking in thousands.

Secondly, we distributed the work by contracting out in small batches to a large number of individual firms. This has a whole series of disadvantages. First it means a duplication of teething troubles. To put a new product into production means that a whole series of technical problems have to be solved afresh and as these remain roughly the same whether the plant is manufacturing ten or ten thousand it is obvious that with a large number of plants manufacturing small quantities the result has been an enormous waste of effort.

Thirdly, small batches mean an expensive machine tool of the universal type and consequently highly skilled labour to handle it. It is not often realised that mass-production technique does not necessarily rely on the complicated automatic machine. If quantities are large enough it is usually more economical to utilise "one operation" types of machine tools, which being extremely simple, are easily produced and can be handled by unskilled labour.

Lastly, the system means a tremendous amount of paper work; it means a duplication of jigs, tools and gauges; it means difficulties in getting interchangeability at the assembly plant, and it means that no advantage can be reaped from mass-production technique.

Has the system any advantages? In theory it ought to give quicker results than the alternatives of building and equipping large specialised factories, but in practice, for various reasons, some of which have been enumerated above, this has not been the case. Secondly, it does give dispersal, but carried to an extreme which experience has shown to be quite unnecessary.

What is the alternative? It is a system which combines the creation of large specialised units working on mass-production principles with the complete turning over of certain civilian establishments to production of a war product, and the remainder (machine tool manufacturers, transport, equipment, etc.) to be left as far as possible on their own product. Where this has been carried out in this country, more by accident than otherwise, its success has been proved. This incidentally is the method which the Americans are adopting.

The problem of obtaining administrative personnel for such plants is not as difficult as might appear at first sight. It is complexity of product which complicates the administrative side of works management, and if existing firms were left to their own products or, alternatively, if they were engaged in the manufacture of large quantities of a comparatively simple component, they would be able to spare personnel to run the new unit.

Furthermore, by concentrating the expansion of productive capacity in state-owned factories it would ease post-war problems by leaving firms nearer their pre-war size. STEWART OWEN

FOOD AND THE WAR OFFICE

SIR,—The gradually increasing encroachment by the military authorities on land specially prepared for the coming harvest has so far attracted insufficient attention.

Close upon the meeting of protest by southern county farmers against the requisitioning of cultivated land by the military authorities we learn that over 300 acres of reclaimed and fertilised common land around Berkhamsted have been similarly seized. Clearly this situation at root represents a complete lack of co-ordination between the War Office and the Ministry of Agriculture in delineating their requirements. This one instance has resulted in the wastage of five months' work, 20,000 labour hours, 15,000 gallons of paraffin, 600 gallons of oil and petrol, the continued use of 15 tractors during peak periods of demand. The requisition was announced only when actual drilling of corn was proceeding.

We are told repeatedly by the Ministry of Agriculture that more and more cattle pasture must be ploughed up: this has been done and the urban population is now reduced to an unhealthy quantity of tinned milk. Three hundred acres of common land unsuitable for pasturage, yet with a high corn potential, might obviously have meant that a corresponding acreage of pasturage might have been spared to maintain milk production.

If the War Office can commandeer prepared farmland without consideration of the requirements of food production, we have no guarantee that all land similarly reclaimed and fertilised by farmers and County Committees will not be likewise commandeered.

It is obvious that if the War Office and the Ministry of Agriculture do not define their requirements in advance before preparing land for the use of either department, their wastage of skilled men and consequent diminution in food production must continue. The clear and urgent necessity is for increased co-ordination in the policies of Agriculture and War Departments. In no other way can mutual frustration be avoided. PAUL S. EDWARDS

Northchurch, Herts. R. H. HILL

NURSING NONSENSE

SIR,—I have been nursing for 25 years, and have held responsible posts in hospital, including teaching posts.

When this century was in its teens the College of Nursing was founded for the purpose of raising the standards of the nursing profession. Its efforts brought about the institution of State registration in 1923. This has been of great benefit to the profession; but in some respects the pendulum has swung too far—theoretical standards have been carried to an unnecessary extreme. In my teaching experience I have found good nurses who could not pass examinations, and nurses who sailed through all the required tests, theoretical and practical, but who lacked the finer qualities of gentleness, self-denial and quiet self-confidence which are indispensable.

On the other hand, a good educational grounding is also indispensable, and I think a standard equivalent to matriculation is necessary for any walk in life, but that is part of the larger issue of "equal opportunity for all," which we hope will come after the war is over. Until then, however, standards external to actual professional education cannot influence the possibilities of advance in the profession. The Royal College of Nursing has refuted the charge of making such a ruling in this week's *Nursing Times*.

I disagree with the assertion that nursing is a working democracy. In many respects it is exactly the opposite. Why is it that in so many cases the wrong people climb the ladder to positions of authority? Why are the people to whom we commit ourselves for training for our lifework so often those to whom we cannot give real respect? Why are the authorities frequently people lacking in culture, though, no doubt, technically excellent in their qualifications? Why are they people of set views and opinions without the power to move forward with the times? Why must they perpetuate the system of authoritarian repression, which was appropriate last century, but has become an anachronism—which, indeed, is typical of the political systems against which we are fighting? Must they, because they suffered as junior probationers, make the young and inexperienced pass through similar distress? Have they any human feelings to deal with the young, or have they become automatons to run the machinery of administration according to fixed laws? Is there not a better way of obtaining the discipline necessary to smooth functioning of the hospital?

Real democracy involves self-government by a self-disciplined society. Qualification for positions of authority in the institutions of such a society are neither technical nor theoretical, but personal. It is only in mutual respect between governor and governed that any community can function, and this is the basis of democracy in its particular as well as its general applications. If nursing is to be a working democracy, the higher grades must be open to people whose technique and education are of a good standard, but primarily and of first importance, whose integrity is beyond question. TUTOR SISTER

LUXURY RESTAURANTS

SIR,—I wish that I understood the abuse that is showered on "Luxury eating in Restaurants." I have just spent ten days in London after a year's absence, and almost all my meals were taken—not at my own expense, I am thankful to say—in hotels and restaurants within half a mile of Bond Street. I have never eaten more uniformly revolting food! I can only suppose that people go to these places, as I did, for the pleasure of seeing their friends, a very rare event in these days, or the other amenities offered. No doubt it is wrong to spend money for such reasons, but that is not the cause of the outcry. And yet no one but a mug would go there for the food if they could get into an ordinary snack bar or pub. I can answer for that. As I do not wish to be sued by half a dozen restaurant proprietors, I sign myself

COUNTRYWOMAN

DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

SIR,—My attention has been called to a passage which appeared in your columns on March 14 in which some comments are made upon a sentence contained in a letter I wrote to the *Times* (March 3).

The sentence in question, quoted apart from its context, might easily convey a misleading impression to your readers. Without entering upon a detailed discussion I should like to assure those who may read this letter, and who may have read also the passage in your columns of March 14, that my whole mind and purpose has been to advocate democratic freedom of access to educational facilities of all types and kinds in the country. JOHN DERBY

ZOSHCHENKO

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Pritchett's review of Zoshchenko's tales and to the question he raises about the position of this writer in Soviet literature, I should like to point out that Zoshchenko is known to Russian readers mainly as the satirist of the period of the New Economic Policy. I recognise the stories "The Agitator," "The Dictaphone," etc., as having been written between the years 1922 and 1925. Other stories referred to by Mr. Pritchett and those that have appeared in your columns bear the unmistakable imprint of the 'twenties, and were written obviously before planning and collectivisation.

Zoshchenko excelled in interpreting the confusion produced in the mind of the "citizen" by the clash and combination of the old and the new. I know of no writing of his after 1928 or thereabouts. He cannot be considered an interpreter of the Russia of to-day, the Russia of science, modern industry and education.

FANIA PASCAL

COLONEL ELTON AND LORD BLIMP

SIR,—If Mr. Low is right in thinking that my omission of "the asinine twist" at the conclusion of two of Blimp's observations distorted their meaning, I apologise. But I must confess that the asinine twist seems to me in these, and other, instances, to make no difference to the fact that the gallant Colonel aroused amusement by talking sound common sense. When, to take another example, he observed: "Gad, sir, Lord Castlebosh is right. We must not neglect chemical warfare. The future of civilisation may depend on our making a worse smell than the enemy," the asinine twist, though it doubtless made us laugh in 1934, does not prevent the Blimpism from appearing in 1942 a stark statement of fact.

May I add that in my book *St. George or the Dragon*, I was not endeavouring to show that Blimp's distinguished creator was wrong about foreign affairs—everybody who said anything about foreign affairs before September, 1939, was wrong somewhere. I was suggesting that Blimp himself was in more than one way the symptom of a tendency in his period which did not make for an efficient army, and also that, despite its *reductio ad absurdum* by a cartoonist of genius, the gallant Colonel's outlook was not so ridiculously antediluvian as it once appeared. ELTON

Old Headington, Oxford.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

WRITING the other week about Whitman, I had to break off and leave a number of questions untouched. One was the political aspect of his poetry. He can still move us powerfully, though in vague directions, by his "democracy."

Let us admit that in politics, as in everything else, Whitman, while looking for his Utopia of camerados, snatched up any megaphone lying handy and embraced with gusto the iniquities as well as the triumphs of a nation struggling to consciousness. Mass enthusiasm drove him into some queer situations. Mr. Fausset (*Walt Whitman*, Cape, 10*s.* 6*d.*) points to two typical instances: Whitman whooped up the war against Mexico louder than anyone; and in his all-embracing celebration of crafts and trades he included the machine-worker and his boss without apparently an inkling of the new stresses of industrialism. "It's good because it exists," is the sort of covering phrase that first stimulates and then lets the reader down with a series of bumps. You can't, in politics, gloriously accept everything; and many of Whitman's catalogues go on echoing with later discoveries:

> . . . and the plotter at his bench,
> And the prison guard with a rubber truncheon,
> And Dachau and Rotterdam and lovely Warsaw
> (both the conquered and the conqueror).
> And Adolf Hitler, because he too in his way is inimitable,
> And Hermann Göring, perfectly round, and Hess with a manly jackboot,
> My camerados . . .
> I am large, I contain lice . . .

But while the self-parody latent in Whitman pops irresistibly to the surface, the fact that we attach him to the present and find him comically lacking in some respects and unexpectedly helpful in others, is itself a proof of his permanence. The democrat and the demagogue speak in him alternately. But compare him, as gospeller and politician, say, with D. H. Lawrence, and Whitman will begin to tower; with Shelley and Swinburne; with Kipling.

Mr. Eliot has recently brought out Kipling for reconsideration, and the argument is that Kipling wrote great political verse which concerns us to-day. The quality of that verse seems to me dismally low, but to take Mr. Eliot's stand, what are Kipling's actual merits as a "poet of empire"? He announced the chosen race, and the response was Kipling dinners and the Society of British Israel; he raised a sympathetic grin for the Cockney exile; he saw the social maggot spreading. Here and there one finds a penetrating note. But the mass of his political verse—*Songs of the Five Nations*, for example—is a blanket of cheap-coloured wools, very much inferior to the republican verse of Swinburne. Also—it is perhaps worth remembering—he was the first cousin of Lord Baldwin, most disastrous and null of all our Prime Ministers. I mention Kipling because he is sometimes spoken of as a "poet of empire" in the sense that Whitman has been called a "poet of democracy." But a "poet of empire" who can kindle neither empire nor poetry? The snag about the "muddied oafs" is that it was they who read and went on unperturbed, while the poem itself is no more than special journalism. Whitman, on the other hand, despite huge personal flaws, deserves his title; there are many passages in his writings when his paean of living and his democratic instincts fuse into poetry.

* * *

I have been re-reading *Drum-Taps* (poems of the Civil War). In some ways it is the most remarkable of Whitman's books and records the one period in his life (spent in nursing the wounded) when his understanding seems not only to dilate, but to grow. He starts, as one might expect, with a swagger, with every bugle blowing; the year passes—"a crashing, sad, distracted year"; then comes the termite activity of armies, forced marches, camping out, battle, the dead and the dying left on the field; he bends over hideous stumps; death, in its double guise of mutilation and peace, shuts out all other scenes, until he loses sides and writes: "My enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead." The realism of "Vigil Strange I kept on the Field One Night," "A March in the Ranks Hard Pressed," and "The Wound-Dresser"—war poetry in the modern sense as rejected by Yeats and defined by Wilfrid Owen's "the poetry is in the pity"—is dateless, and I believe that Whitman was the first to bring such experiences into poetry. *Drum-Taps* was republished and read during the last war. Its legacy to-day, through the influence of two generations—Owen's and Auden's—can be seen in almost every war poem written; three or four stanzas, now, are enough to whisk us through the whole Whitman cycle of years and feelings, and the soldier-poet grasps at war-weariness before he has finished training. The stock poem has been written so often that there is no need for me to describe it further. You find it turning up again in *Poems From the Forces*,* together with morse tappings from 1918:

> Gas!
> Feverish fumbling,
> Fingers in straps and strings,
> A deep drawn breath, etc.

This looks like Robert Nichols, but actually it is John Cromer, and this time the gas attack is a false alarm. *Poems From the Forces* represents men in all stages of service and self-discovery. There are the few who have been in action; some copy the past; some anticipate experience; others make something out of inexperience. On the whole, the last are the most interesting, and those who look like becoming writers probably have leisure as well. They report, with the acuteness of mingled good health and nerves, a landscape new to them, Welsh valleys, the Channel, the nearest town with pub and cinema, days of training, air-raids (if they're in the R.A.); they think, occasionally, of the future or a dead friend, but more often of their wives and lovers, the nights before enlistment. The new note in *Poems From the Forces*, so far as it has one, is sex. I should have expected to find also a mechanic's pride, ennui and its alleviations, and a discriminating hero-worship; these are present, but usually in crude or conventional forms. I have generalised about this anthology because that is how one enjoys it—as a composite picture, which Mr. Keidrych Rhys has put together, so far as one can judge, with energy and skill. There are particular poets who stand out—Mervyn Peake, Alun Lewis, John Waller, Alan Rook and Rhys himself—but it has to be a damned good poem of realistic moods that will compete with, say, John Strachey's reporting of air-raid or landing-ground incidents. The introduction complains, by the way, of the difficulty most of these young poets have had in getting their work published in periodicals. The answer is—partly at any rate—that few of these poems are individually striking, that they gain immensely by being printed in bulk. Mr. Rhys seems to have found the solution, and I hope this first collection will be followed by others.

* * *

The best poem in the book in Alun Lewis's "All Day It Has Rained . . . ."

> All day it has rained, and we on the edge of the moors
> Have sprawled in our bell-tents, moody and dull as boors,
> Groundsheets and blankets spread on the muddy ground
> And from the first grey wakening we have found
> No refuge from the skirmishing fine rain
> And the wind that made the canvas heave and flap
> And the taut wet guy-ropes ravel out and snap.
> All day the rain has glided, wave and mist and dream,
> Drenching the gorse and heather, a gossamer stream
> Too light to stir the acorns that suddenly
> Snatched from their cups by the wind south-westerly
> Pattered against the tent and our upturned dreaming faces.
> And we stretched out, unbuttoning our braces,
> Smoking a Woodbine, darning dirty socks,
> Reading the Sunday papers—I saw a fox
> And mentioned it in the note I scribbled home;—
> And we talked of girls, and dropping bombs on Rome,
> And thought of the quiet dead and the loud celebrities
> Exporting us to slaughter, and the herded refugees . . . .

To convey such typical scenes, to animate their flatness as a car's lamp does a road, is difficult enough, as a glance through *Poems From the Forces* will show. "All Day It Has Rained" is a modest triumph; it reappears with other pieces of the kind in the author's first book of poems, *Raider's Dawn*.* Alun Lewis himself stresses his debt to Edward Thomas, and the quietist side of his talent is at present the most effective. Whatever the mood of his verse one senses behind easy diction a patient and continual stocktaking. Routine, boredom, a hardening anguish, thoughts of death, relaxation, curdling passion, the midnight scream and the cool observation by day—these are the moods for which Mr. Lewis has been seeking focus. He shows a surprising pliability of forms, from the Edward Thomas landscape to the Eliot "sonata," but I am speaking of influences and not imitation. He has, except in moments of self-pity (they are too many), a voice of his own. He notes in himself the odd

> Sardonic scorn of desolate self-pity,
> The pathetic contempt of the lonely for the crowd;
> And as the crystal slowly forms,
> A growing self-detachment making man
> Less home-sick, fearful, proud,
> But less a man.
> Beneath all this
> The dark imagination that would pierce
> Infinite night and reach the waiting arms
> And soothe the guessed-at tears . . . .

The distinctive features of *Raider's Dawn* seem to me the more casual love poems, the landscapes, the civilian and camp life, the advance in self-knowledge, and a gift, rather too smoothly employed, of sliding from one level to another. "Two thirds," says the author, "of these poems have been written on active service." How active? I wonder; for many of Mr. Lewis's pages give the impression of having been worked out at leisure. But he seems to possess one essential of the soldier-poet—the ability to go on writing through thick and thin.

G. W. STONIER

THE FUTURE

Darkness and the Light. By OLAF STAPLEDON. *Methuen.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

IN this book Mr. Stapledon envisages two different futures for mankind: one dark, the other bright. He sees the world as a dualism, the scene of a struggle between two powers of good and evil; man's soul is the battlefield on which they strive for the mastery, and, Mr. Stapledon suggests, the climax of their conflict is to be reached in our own era. Thereafter he conceives time to be split into two streams: the one carries a future for man in which Darkness triumphs; implicit in the other is the triumph of the good or, as Mr. Stapledon calls it, "the Light." Mr. Stapledon's method is to diagnose the multitudinous tendencies latent in the muddled societies of the twentieth century, and of the no less muddled soul of twentieth-century man, to separate them into two bundles, the evil and the good, and then to follow the development of the tendencies contained in each bundle to their separate logical conclusions—follow them, that is to say, as far as thought can reach, on the assumption that they are allowed to work out their destiny untroubled, or only diminishingly troubled, by interference from the tendencies in the other bundle.

* *Poems From the Forces.* By Keidrych Rhys. Routledge. 6*s.*

* *Raider's Dawn.* By Alun Lewis. Allen & Unwin. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Stapledon's picture of triumphant Darkness is terrifying. Upon its more repulsive features he lavishes that wealth of imaginative exuberance with which readers of *Last and First Men* will be familiar. With his radio sets inserted into men's skulls to record their thoughts for the benefit of the government, with his new religion of pain expressing itself in mystical unions of ecstatic agony between torturer and tortured, with his virus-infected belts of poisonous ultra-microscopic dust designed to insulate the fighting Empires from each other, he succeeds in making the hair rise and the flesh creep. He is particularly good at describing the arrangements and devices of Brave New World. I hope I am not doing him an injustice, if I say that at times he seems to gloat over the fiendish ingenuity of the bestial devices he depicts.

But the real difficulty of the undertaking begins when he attempts to picture the victory of the Light. We can all glory, both as writers and as readers, in portraits of pain and evil, but it is difficult to make righteousness readable. Hell has often been preferred for its company—Dante's *Paradiso* is a dull work compared with Dante's *Inferno*—and the long line of Utopias are either featureless to the point of vacancy, or featured with such revolting piety that the unregenerate stomach of the present turns sick at the thought of living in such a future. Mr. Stapledon does not wholly overcome this difficulty. The children of the Light live in villages, not in towns (they would do) and are remarkable rather for increased virtue (they are kind and nice to one another) rather than for increased cleverness (they would be) but, on the whole, Mr. Stapledon's account of the provisions of the future shows commendable insight into the needs of the present. He makes, for example, handsome acknowledgment of the claims both of cosmopolitanism and of regionalism. Thus, while certain essential institutions which bestow minimum rights upon individuals, prescribe a uniform code of law and lay down a basis of education designed to develop the will to community and loyalty to the human race, are made obligatory upon all States, the maximum of cultural diversity and local self-sufficiency is encouraged. Every part of the world is now in a position to produce everything that is needful for civilised living, but different countries specialise in distinctive local products for the making of which they have a traditional skill. All workers are paid by the different State governments, federated under a world government, with the exception of three classes: the capitalist and their employees, whose privately gained wealth is nevertheless confined below certain upper limits; the artists and writers for whose work the world is not yet ready, and the tramps and idlers who can be made to work only under compulsion. These classes live upon a generous State dole, available to any unemployed man who wants it.

Mr. Stapledon has the wit to see that in a properly run community what we call government will cease to be the supremely important job, while politics will no longer offer prizes to able and ambitious men. The ambitions which take men into politics to-day are the products of and are nourished by our unstable and unhappy society. There is nothing particularly exciting about running the affairs of a community; government is, in essence, a clerk's job, albeit a super-clerk's, and in the millenium of the future, politics and the civil service, the preserves of a hereditary bureaucratic caste imbued by a high sense of public duty, will be no more exciting than is the work of local government to-day. Mr. Stapledon shrewdly casts the Germans—how well we know their organising genius—for the role of organising a peaceful world community, for the joys of mental adventure in science, in art, or in philosophy will be found too exciting to leave their devotees time to waste on the comparatively humdrum business of law-making and law administering.

In the closing chapters the book sails on to the seas of metaphysical speculation. Mr. Stapledon recognises as among the interests of the future human race the advance of science, particularly in the realm of inter-planetary communication, the refinement of the human spirit in art, the development of the possibilities of human intercourse, and the enriching of the soul and sharpening of the vision of man by spiritual discipline, so that he may attain to a clearer awareness of the nature of the universe and of the status of man within it. There are phases of discouragement, as man's sharpened vision penetrates to layers of reality where evil predominates—our world is seen as a mere "snowflake" in a universe of "brawling Titans"—but beyond and behind there is discerned a "brilliance of the spirit" to a realisation of which the whole human race is dedicated. Development is, however, suddenly cut short by the breaking up of the surface of our planet, and we take leave of the human race facing the doom of extinction.

Of these later developments one feels that there should have been either more or less. Inevitably they are metaphysical, but the metaphysics is too strong for the literary vessel in which it is encased, and tends to break bounds. On the other hand, it is not strong enough for a serious treatment of the issues which it raises. I want to see Mr. Stapledon write two books, one a straight imaginative history of the future, the other a serious exposition of a philosophical view at which he hints, but never succeeds in stating.

But I do not want to carp; to do so would be ungrateful for what we have already been given. I am much more disposed to take off my hat to a very considerable achievement.

C. E. M. JOAD

NEW NOVELS

Something of a Hero. By I. J. KAPSTEIN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 10s. 6d.

The Rich House. By STELLA GIBBONS. *Longmans Green.* 9s. 6d.

As I Was Going Down Sackville Street. By O. ST. JOHN GOGARTY. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

The reviewer wondered on reading *Something of a Hero* if his feelings of admiration might not be in some sort due to the rarity of novels about ideas at the present time; and as a check cast back to Mr. Arthur Koestler's novel to find if the first impression of it had been justified. At first reading *Darkness at Noon* appeared to have its strength in its relation to a particular contemporary political question, but on re-reading its theses about the relations of rulers and ruled one is impressed by the depth of the arguments. One is certain it deals with problems that will rise under any system of government we know or can imagine. Briefly, the book seems likely to have permanent value as the clear and rational statement of both sides of an argument that perpetually recurs. Returning from Mr. Koestler to Mr. Kapstein makes one realise that although *Something of a Hero* is on a different intellectual plane, it is in the same class as *Darkness at Noon* and is an extremely successful use of the novel to discuss social problems. The problem is specifically American, but of the greatest interest: the book is about the conflict between the last pioneer generation and the first generation to feel the need for a responsible government. All the virtues of the pioneers who made modern America became anti-social as soon as they had finished their work. The buffalo of the western plains made agriculture impossible so they were massacred, the Indians held up the railways, stole cattle, and fought settlers as nomads will, so

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they were shot down by the Indian fighters—these things stood between America and her manifest destiny and the men who swept them aside were revered as heroes. But when it became plain that America's Manifest Destiny was Industrial rather than Agrarian such methods of solving problems showed themselves to be deficient. The legend was constructed that there was some deep spiritual difference between the first and the later waves of immigrants: these were in some way unassimilable and un-American. They showed this sinister character by objecting to uncontrolled hours of work, intolerable factory conditions, and grotesque pay rates, and by organising themselves into Trade Unions. The Daniel Boones of industry reacted, as their pioneer exemplars had reacted to the buffalo and the Indians, with complete ruthlessness and disregard of moral considerations. The tactics were terrorism through the murder of individuals, and the strategy was based on the 14th amendment of the Constitution, the key clause of which had been drafted by a corporation lawyer with the intention of nullifying any legislation that might attempt to control the relations of any enterprise with the public or with its workers. As long as industrial expansion seemed to have no limit, the legend stood, and the mass of the American people really believed it and accepted the story that undesirable foreign elements were responsible for all labour troubles, and most money troubles. Social services sapped the spirit of rugged individualism: Richard Mellon was right when he said that you couldn't run a coal company without machine guns, and any man who wanted work could find it. Mr. Kapstein's book deals with the collapse of these *idées reçues* in the bitter years after 1929, when the American people found the legend turning back on themselves. There have been few novels published in England dealing so brilliantly with such a social crisis, and none that could do so much to explain the issues in the last ten years of American politics and the very nature of America to the English reader. One cannot overpraise it from this point of view. The book also has the very considerable virtue of being a thoroughly readable novel with an interesting story about interesting people; the time-killing reader can slide along over the issues and have a smooth and untroubled passage. *Something of a Hero* is a first novel and considered as such is an astonishing achievement.

The Rich House is small beer of the very best quality. It is written on a cosy Victorian pattern round the love affairs of five young persons, is stiff with plot, and has the culminating outrage of a happy ending. It should no doubt be piffling and trivial, but the author has very definite ideas about why her characters behave as they do, and contrasts their behaviour with a code on the strength of which she is not afraid to make moral judgments; so the effect is otherwise—of lightness from something strong. The fullness of the characterisation, and the rounded balance of form, combine to make it a very enjoyable novel.

There is a lot to be said for the way of life of the liberal bourgeois, with their mild pleasures, their limited ambitions, and their good intentions. It is just as well that someone should say it now and again.

Mr. Gogarty having had a brush with the chilly abstractions of the English law of libel over his description of life in Ireland, now settles down to see how close to the wind he can come in describing English life. Once bitten and so on; the crisp actuality of the Dublin scene of *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street* (pointed up by the racket of the sniping which ended the Golden Age) is gone; it is all chasing guardedly anonymous Dollies among elaborately pseudonymous vicarage and country house settings. Foreign views of England vary enormously in charm, ranging as they do from such essays in the macabre as Céline's account of academic life in Chatham to the Hollywood version of *The Green Hat*, and those strange epics produced by Hungarians, directed by Czechoslovaks, acted by godknowswhats in Metroland. Mr. Gogarty's effort falls midway between the two latter types of vision. One pictures all the men as looking exactly like the male fashion plates in *Esquire*, while the ladies are undoubtedly those who frequent our London Sackville Street, W., from twilight onwards, giving as little as possible on their own hard terms. The anecdotes appear in the main to be worked up from smoking-room folk-lore and limericks of the 1910-1935 period, and one typical minor joke harks back to an earlier period still:

> I do not mean the poet of the Pines at Putney who expired under the most distressing of all circumstances—in the arms of a solicitor. I do not refer to Swinburne and Watts Dunton (such a name! It sounds like the bewildered query of a client "Wot's done to it?" presumably when he is puzzled as to what has become of his estate).

Whistler's little pun was a poor enough thing, but it was his own at least. This example of anecdote-flattening, worthy of Joe Miller, provokes one to certain reflections about humour—leading to the conclusion that if there is anything more boring than unedited talk written down, it is flat talk delivered by one who has all the airs and graces of a witty *raconteur*. ANTHONY WEST

UNSTALED VARIETY

Essays in Criticism and Research. By GEOFFREY TILLOTSON. *Cambridge University Press.* 15s.

How is one adequately to criticise a book which treats, in twenty-three essays written during the last eight or nine years, of subjects ranging from "Things in Heaven," Othello, Bacon, to the "New Lady's Magazine of 1786"? More especially as the volume itself shows, on every page, with what learning and ability one's criticism will in its turn be criticised by the author? But the attempt must be made, though the reviewer will, whenever he ventures to disagree with so distinguished a scholar as Professor Tillotson, remember Hermann's remark about Lachmann. And, while he will find a good deal with which he does disagree, he will be constantly stimulated, and will be constantly learning something new about writers with whom he had thought himself tolerably familiar.

And now, to pass from the third person to the first, I should say that the reader would do well, after studying the extremely vigorous preface, to take up the two essays on Pope, which strike the keynote of the whole, and which lend some unity to a book whose variety might seem at first sight confusing. It is plain that Professor Tillotson desires to give his support to that reaction in favour of the "classical" school of poetry which has been so visible in recent years. This means, inevitably, a discussion of the "classical" diction; for it is probable that what revolted Wordsworth and Coleridge was quite as much the Popian phraseology as the subjects with which the Popians chose to deal. But the "romantics" should have remembered that words change their associations. What is sublime or beautiful in one decade is trivial in another; and, as Addison pointed out long ago, the ancient poets have the advantage to-day that we cannot know when their language has lost in dignity. It is imperative that, in reading old writers, and especially the "classicists," we should compel ourselves, whatever the effort, to forget modern connotations, and take the words as they were meant to be taken—until, in fact, we can read without a smile that Helen "clasped

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FREDERICK MULLER

the blooming hero in her arms." But how often is this simple rule neglected! Matthew Arnold disliked Gray's "Thy Joys no glittering female meets." He ought to have known that if "female" had been unpoetical in Gray's time, Gray would not have used the word. Further, Professor Tillotson shows, more fully I think than anyone had shown before, that there must be something vital in this diction; for the romantics, who hated it, could not help, at times, falling into it.

We are thus prepared for a study of words and phrases, such for example as "fleecy cares," "the Mantuan swain"; a study at times very minute, and occasionally I think unnecessary, but in the main suggestive.

It is when Professor Tillotson passes on to an uncompromising admiration of almost everything that Pope and Dryden wrote, I feel inclined to enter a respectful caveat. For the Dryden of "Absalom and Achitophel" I have nothing but praise: the translation of Virgil is to me, with the original in mind, often wearisome. I can unstintedly approve of Pope as an epigrammatist—even the "Essay on Man" is admirable in everything but its treatment of its professed subject—but his Homer is to me not even what it was to Bentley, a "pretty poem." The famous speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus, which Pope chose as his first published specimen, one of the very greatest passages in the world, fails utterly to move me in Pope's version. The monotony of the metre, aggravated by the strongly accented conclusion of each line, not even Professor Tillotson's authority can induce me to approve.

After reading all this, and weighing every paragraph, let the student turn to the rest, and he will benefit at every turn. As a pleasant variation, let him take up the article on the Lady's Magazine. Curiously enough, I had accidentally hit on this periodical already, and it was gratifying to see that Professor Tillotson had the same feelings about it as I had.

The Professor has not omitted to discuss quotation—a subject of eternal interest, and especially so to those who love Milton, Gray, or Bunyan. The book quotes everywhere: and here, to end on a still lighter note than that of the Lady, I should like to give his quotation from Mr. Waley's rendering of a Chinese poem, which may be new to some, and which will show once more that there is nothing really new under the sun:

> Families, when a child is born,
> Want it to be intelligent.
> I, through intelligence
> Having wrecked my whole life,
> Only hope the baby will prove
> Ignorant and stupid;
> Then he will crown a tranquil life
> By becoming a Cabinet Minister.

E. E. KELLETT

TRADERS' EMPIRE

British Rule in Eastern Asia. By LENNOX A. MILLS. *Oxford University Press.* 25s.

An obvious irony attends the publication in March, 1942, of a survey of British administration in Malaya and Hong Kong. None the less this painstaking record is valuable; the more so because its author is an American and thus not predisposed to view our government with favour. British imperialism has a bad press in the States. On the other hand, Professor Mills based his work upon a meticulous study of official documents, and a year's tour in the Far East, where his contacts were bound to be with officials and European residents, in the main, so that he writes from their angle. The account of the administrative system is very well done: it is interesting, in the history of Malaya, to see how the imperfectly conceived indirect rule by the Sultans in the Federated States was denuded of all reality, and how the Colonial Office tried again and again to restore it, and was baffled by the facts of the case. These were that Malaya had become a country of export, whose whole economy was based upon foreign capital and labour. The only active share of the Malays in the economic system was smallholders' rubber cultivation—a third of the total was "native" rubber—and over their passive share, the extension of education and medical services, the salaried Sultans had little control. Much more vitality remained in the five Unfederated States. But in the whole penisula, the Malays were less than half the population, and remained peasants with clerkships in European offices as the ambition of the educated. The Indians, nearly all plantation labourers, enjoyed much better wages, conditions of labour, housing, and education than in India; (the literate percentage is three times as high), and tended to settle down as permanent colonists. The Chinese immigrants as entrepreneurs and labourers formed nearly half the total population, and the immense majority in Singapore. The anti-British propaganda of the Kuomintang, very strong among them, and the violence of Communist propaganda which ran at one period to bombing a leading official, created a difficult political situation. But the official generalisation of "subversive," which Mr. Mills uses for Chinese movements both in Malaya and Hong Kong, does not justify lack of official adaptability when the movements changed their direction. The book reveals, unconsciously, the immense psychological difficulty of turning a "plural society," made of separate national layers, into a living organism. It is pleasant to note that Professor Mills compares the welfare services, especially health, communications and labour conditions, favourably with those of the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. The Hong Kong section is equally complete on the mechanism of government, but shares the deficiency of the rest in realising and describing the feelings and problems of the governed. That is what really matters, in the end. Whatever the outcome of this war may be, Singapore will still be the hub of the Indonesian wheel; and tin and iron will still be mined, and rubber grown in Malaya. The demand of industry for raw materials will persist; its impact upon the people of the countries which produce them will still be revolutionary and potentially destructive. British rule was sincerely benevolent in intention; and much more disinterested than that of Japan is likely to prove. But the synthesis of the tropical peoples in world society is hardly begun.

FREDA WHITE

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one is glad to see preserved. Comic verse is often anonymous, often ephemeral; the task of collecting it is correspondingly difficult and rewarding.

One or two omissions are surprising, notably Ben Jonson, Lord Alfred Douglas and A. P. Herbert (who deserves a place on the strength alone of *Veni, Vidi, Vichy*). A few poems are neither intentionally nor unintentionally comic, contemporary Americans are inadequately represented, and Gilbert and Robert Graves could have yielded better poems than those selected. Nevertheless, Mr. Roberts has chosen well in the main, and he includes many good things which most editors would have missed.

Until the nineteenth century comic verse was mostly confined to *jeux d'ésprit* in the margin of more serious work. With the emergence of Hood and Calverley and the supreme masters, Lear, Gilbert and Carroll, comic verse became an art in its own right. The present century has been almost a second Golden Age, for at least E. C. Bentley, Harry Graham and Hilaire Belloc must rank with the immortals of their kind. Belloc's *Lines to a Don* is not so accessible as it ought to be—it is even omitted from the *Everyman* Belloc — and I am grateful to Mr. Roberts for including it; he has skimmed the cream of Belloc admirably. Incidentally, Mr. Roberts adds a sly touch of humour on his own account by slipping in this couplet from Charles Churchill:

Caress'd and courted, Faber seems to stand
A mighty pillar in a guilty land.

The Faber Book of Comic Verse is well up to Faber standards, and perhaps that is praise enough. I doubt if many books will be more welcome than this in the Services, particularly among those who stand by monotonously in unexciting places. As for civilians—well, genuine cases of humour deficiency will find it a great tonic.

DESMOND HAWKINS

Frans Hals. By N. S. TRIVAS. *Phaidon Press, Allen and Unwin.* 15s.

Hals is the idol of those for whom the prime virtue of a picture is to be "life-like"; and since this criterion has always been adopted by those who "know nothing about art," it is surprising that he was so unprosperous. His pursuit of realism led him to increasingly broad handling, but his virtuosity never conceals his lack of sensibility. The heavy shadow round and below the nostril becomes a formula and the most tiresome of trade-marks. His use of halberds in the group-portraits betrays, moreover, his inability to compose. In the late "Regentessin at Haarlem" he suddenly shows surprising power, but of all the Old Masters he is the least worthy of his reputation.

This Phaedon edition contains at a low price about 150 admirably printed reproductions, and has one conspicuous advantage over its predecessors: the works shown in colour are also given in the immensely more satisfactory black and white. Since the book is produced in this country, though composed in America, the editor's English might have been corrected. One has to guess what he means by "dominating gamma."

Penguin New Writing, 11. 6*d*.

The rainbow-coloured *New Writing* has reached indigo and number eleven of the series. An engine-driver in "The Way We Live Now" gives reminiscences of black-out and blitz, and those who remember crawling into London by train with the bombs falling will learn what it was like for the driver; one day he might meet machine-gun fire tearing up the carriages, the next he would have to stop for cattle on the line. Other new contributions include the first instalment of a longish story by Rosamund Lehmann, "The Gipsy's Baby," which promises well with the dogs, cats and gipsies of childhood; a poem by Day Lewis; an article by Spender on professionalism and poetry. Among the reprinted are Chamson, Lorca (a very good poem), and Dylan Thomas.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto in B flat minor.* Horowitz, with N.B.C. Symphony Orch., cond. Toscanini (H.M.V. DB8922–5.)

IRELAND: *Concerto in E flat.* Eileen Joyce, with Hallé Orch., cond. Leslie Howard (Col. DX8178–80).

RAVEL: *La Valse*, San Francisco Symphony Orch., cond. Pierre Monteux (H.M.V. DB5964–5).

HEROLD: Overture "*Zampa.*" Boston Promenade Orch., cond. Fiedler (H.M.V. C3283).

BLOCH: String Quartet. Stuyvesant Quartet. (Col. LX934–9).

BLOCH: Piano Quintet. Pro Arte Quartet with Alfredo Casella. (H.M.V. DB8918–21).

BACH: "*Ah yes, Just so,*" from *Phoebus and Pan*, and SCHUBERT: "*To Music.*" Isobel Baillie (Col. DB2067)

TRAD: "*She moved thro' the fair,*" and MOLLOY: "*Bantry Bay.*" McCormack, acc. Gerald Moore (H.M.V. DA1813).

The piano concerto is no longer what it was. Menaced by the raised finger of neo-Puritanism, composers of the last twenty years have been afraid of letting themselves go. Yet a concerto which does not declaim under a spotlight is unworthy the name. No one knew this better than Tchaikovsky, whose tortured, self-dramatising nature expressed itself most naturally through a form in which operatic and lyrical features have to be incorporated in a symphonic scheme. His first piano concerto has not always been approved by musicians, but I feel pretty sure their noses were tilted at the wrong angle. The great public loves this work—for the magnificent rhetoric of the opening pages, for the rhapsodical sweep and vitality of the music, for the tender beauty of the andante, for the wonderful exploitation of the solo instrument. We have now a fine choice of recordings. Those of Petri and Rubinstein seem to me still the best, and almost equally fine. The most recent issue has, however, its points. It is far better, both in recording and performance, than the Horowitz-Toscanini Brahms Concerto; every ounce of drama is wrung from the passages which will yield it (and sometimes from those which won't); and Horowitz's Niagara of octaves in the first and last movements is really exciting. But the piano tone is disagreeably "squeezed"; the middle parts of the score tend to disappear from time to time, so that (for instance) the second subject of the first movement sounds stringy instead of rich and mellow; and the big climaxes are mere nests of noise. Moreover, the romantic quality of the andante, in the return of the melody after the waltz-scherzo, is thrown right away. The finale, however, sounds thrilling.

Mr. Ireland shows us the romantic concerto in its decadence, which does not mean that he has nothing of interest to contribute to it. This composer's rather cloying and limited style has not evolved in any essential way since he wrote "The Island Spell" some twenty-five years ago; but his inspiration is attractively English—in the sense that Cotman's was—and this concerto contains some lovely stuff, notably the opening of the lento, of which, however, he makes, I feel, too little. Not to have allowed us to hear this tune again in full seems a needless vexation. Decoration is not Mr. Ireland's strong point, and the style of the piano writing, which oddly recalls the concertos of Anton Rubinstein, appears to me unsuited to a first movement. Mr. Ireland is here, in fact, rather dull; but the transition at the end of the lento is finely managed and the resulting finale effective enough. The performance and recording are unexceptionable. This is from all points of view an interesting issue, well worth acquiring. One might not want to hear it very often, but there are moods in which it would be welcome.

Ravel, I often feel, may easily have composed *La Valse* while luxuriating in a deep, hot, scented bath, with a bag of sweets handy. In any case he will not have needed to put himself about; the obvious enjoyment of the composer is here not far short of

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Company Meeting

UNITED KINGDOM PROVIDENT INSTITUTION

THE Annual General Meeting of the members of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution will be held at the head office, 196, Strand, London, W.C., on April 8th.

The following is extracted from the statement of the Chairman, Sir Ernest J. P. Benn, Bt., circulated with the Report and Accounts:—

The one hundred and first statement of accounts and the report of the directors, with the results of the triennial valuation, disclose, in the exceptional circumstances of the times, a position which can only be regarded as highly satisfactory.

Seeing that the net earning capacity of the fund at the present time is much reduced, your directors have deemed it wise to strengthen still further the basis of valuation. We are now adopting a rate of 2½ per cent. for all with profit policies, which comprise the bulk of our business, and once again taking the lead in a movement towards greater security.

Last year I expressed the view that wars and bonuses were incompatible, an opinion which many hold to be applicable in a far more general way. With the explanations I have given it will be seen that a moderate bonus in respect of the last triennium might have been declared if the experience of 1915 and 1920 had not been available as a guide and a warning. While the deferment of a bonus decision until the next valuation is undoubtedly in the best interest of the members as a whole, it is necessary that justice should be done to those whose policies become claims by maturity or by death in the meantime. It has therefore been decided, until further notice, to pay to such cases interim bonuses calculated upon the sums assured, increased by the total of previous bonuses attaching to each policy, and dating back to 1939. In the General Section these interim bonuses will be at the rate of 20s., and in the Temperance Section Whole Life and Long Term Endowments Assurances will receive 21s. per £100 insured.

CHARTERED BANK OF INDIA, AUSTRALIA & CHINA

STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION

EXTRACT from the statement of the chairman (Mr. V. A. Grantham) to be submitted at the 88th ordinary general meeting of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China on April 1st next:

The year 1941 proved to be one of constant and increasing difficulty. The entry of Japan into the war has resulted in many of our branches falling into enemy hands.

The balance-sheet again shows considerable expansion, the total at £90,925,552 being an increase of £14,811,324 over last year's record. The increase is largely confined to current and other resources, which, with an increase of £14,465,559, stand at £67,844,490. Fixed deposits, on the other hand, show a further decrease of £1,980,251 at £10,146,113. The only other changes of note in our liabilities are an increase in acceptances on account of customers of £1,394,877, and an increase of some £972,500 in loans payable against security.

The assets side of the balance-sheet shows the bank to be in an extremely strong and liquid position. Cash in hand at £14,787,422 is £3,208,905 higher than a year ago, and comprises 21.8 per cent. of our liabilities on current accounts, or 20.7 per cent. of all our sight liabilities. We again show a large increase, amounting to £9,714,158, in our Government and other securities, the actual total being £37,435,924. This increase is mainly the result of purchases of British Government securities, chiefly tap issues of a short-dated character. Bills of exchange, including Treasury bills, show a decrease of £2,233,636. Bills discounted and loans at £23,733,338 show a welcome increase from the profit-earning point of view of £3,092,402, and this increase has not occurred at points in the occupation of the enemy at December 31st, 1941.

I now come to the profit and loss account. The result of the full year's working shows a profit of £352,865, after providing for all ascertainable losses and for taxation. Adding the balance brought forward from last year of £182,602, a total of £535,467 is available, out of which an interim dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum was paid last October. The directors propose that the final dividend be reduced to 5 per cent. per annum.

pornographic. But what comes as easy as this is seldom really worth doing, and the poetry of *La Valse* is distinctly meretricious, as that of the *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* was not. Moreover, the final dazzle is a failure; the law of diminishing returns comes into operation long before the end, and a climax approached in that fashion simply cannot culminate. But the work has its pleasing melodic movements, as well as others of the usual impressionist orchestral brilliance; and here, for once, is a really first-rate recording from America.

What a lot of Bloch! Does the Gramophone Company *want* to give us all a pain? Listeners are advised to take these huge works one at a time, with an interval for digestion. The Quartet is interesting because it is so French; in the five years that elapsed between it and the composition of the Quintet (1923), the tragic, Semitic qualities of Bloch's imagination crystallised and matured. But it does not do to forget the French background to all his music. The Quartet is a magnificent, encyclopaedic piece of writing; but I'm afraid the quality of the recording is not such as to assist in making this abstruse and extensive work pleasant to listen to. In fact, it is almost unbelievably bad, recalling pre-electric days when there was never any bass to speak of and a uniformly feeble "attack." A considered judgment of the music cannot be founded on such a series of scrapings and fizzlings. The Quintet is a very different affair. Its status as a musical masterpiece is, I believe, scarcely questioned now. It is certainly the composer's finest work, and though the quality of the style and imagery may not be to everybody's taste, it would be hard to resist the strenuous conviction of the material, or the mysterious, melancholy beauty of the slow movement. Bloch does not seem to have been able to resist the temptation—universal where there is a piano to do the filling in—to lay out too much of the music for the strings in octaves; and the opening of the finale perhaps sacrifices too much to percussive and rhythmical ingenuities. But the coda is a dream and a consolation such as we rarely hear. The recording is good, but not superlative; the climaxes lack bite and the piano is kept infuriatingly in the background. The performance, however, could hardly be improved upon.

Count McCormack's diction is this time less affected than in some recent issues. "She moved thro' the fair" has real beauty of line; but "Bantry Bay" is simply the mixture as before.

I prefer Miss Baillie in the Bach aria, to which her style seems better suited than to Schubert, though even there her excellent taste produces something pleasing. But she is not, I think, a natural *Lieder* singer.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 634

Set by Kingsley Martin

A few years ago the newspapers reported the case of a woman shot through the head by her husband. He put a notice on the door of her room instructing the next visitor to call the police and then went into the garden and shot himself. "Why," asked a friend in surprise, "did he do that?" "I suppose," I said, "he wouldn't be seen dead with her."

The usual prizes are offered for the best similar example of an incident and comment which gives life and significance to a stock phrase.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, April 6.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 631

Set by Saint-Loup

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for an extract of not more than twenty lines from a presumed poem by Browning, entitled "Thoughts of an Englishman Unable to Go Abroad."

Report by Saint-Loup

What would be Browning's "Abroad-thoughts from Home," as William Bliss puts it? Pride in being here and horror of a Continent robbed of liberty? A soldierly longing to dash to the rescue of our foreign friends? Or plain nostalgia? Most entries fall into these three classes, and all are admissible so that I have sought to judge merely on style. F.C.C. has sent uncommonly good verses but they are not very characteristic of Browning. Willy Tadpole and Miss R. Maxwell each sent two good versions. Ronald Mason ends superbly:

> All lost!—and *tendo* (the Latin runs)
> *Manus* (you take me?) and then *ripae*
> *Ulterioris amore*—Dunce,
> When I construe, knowing not t'would apply
> Now Fortune's malice—I've said that once.

Leslie Johnson and N. M. Pickering were well in the running, so was Frank Adams. But I recommend confidently G. de Vavasour for first prize and Silvia Tatham for second. The latter has sent a poem I can well imagine Browning writing (in feeling and style), while the former has sent the best imitation of Browning it has ever been my pleasure to read.

FIRST PRIZE

Last night, when I opened the book, just to savour it,
A blue ribbon fell from Jack Donne, your old favourite.
Then I heard you and saw you: long-fingered, dark, mournful, El Greco.
It was nothing: a trick of the firelight: some echo—
But how that ghost-meeting
Has set my heart beating!
London! the man who seeks may find
A canal to live by, if he's a mind.
He may see in the spring the stern stone plinth
In focus of crocus and hyacinth;
A land, indeed, where maids, jades, rakes hear
All day, if they will, the speech of Shakespeare.
But who can be safe? this old torn label
Starts in my ears a whole Babel.
I fly to my vintner—heart beating—well, so far, andante.
"What, no Chianti?"
"No, but my shop yields
For you, sir, the best of Kent's hopfields."
To each his taste. I'm to the Gallery, there to do honour
To that single-hung modest-voluptuous Luini Madonna.

(G. DE VAVASOUR)

SECOND PRIZE

"Spring! And Attica not get-at-able!
Your statesmen to blame, and one in particular;
(Names not named are yet unforgetable).
The almond's in bloom, with its carpet auricula,
Drops ambrosial from cloud-capped Olympus;
But it's corn *they're* needing, and here they don't skimp us.

War or no war, we're in clover; in Greece where
Is oil of the olive, your rich corn from Egypt?
Statesmen of Europe your sins do not cease there,
For you, says *The Times*, have but o'er one sea shipped
Corn for the children of Hellas, of spring-land;
O God, and I'm impotent, held here in England!

And if I see red you'll forgive, you *The Statesman*,
(Not statesmen). For there, worn thin to the marrow,
Is a Child, with its hand out for bread, and it waits, man,
Not speaking, just waiting. There's a bow for this arrow,
That's me, both the force (that's the bow) and the flight there,
If my verse flies straight to the gold and alights there!"

(SILVIA TATHAM)

AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE & ELECTRIC

THE Annual General Meeting of Automatic Telephone and Electric Company, Limited, will be held on 1st April, at Liverpool.

The following is an extract from the statement by the Chairman, Sir Alexander Roger, K.C.I.E., circulated with the Report and Accounts:—

Factory orders and output reached a satisfactory level. The Profit on Trading, Dividends on Investments, etc., at £261,548 compares with £238,052 and is after reserving for E.P.T., ordinary Taxation and Contingency Reserves Adjustment. The directors recommend transfer of £60,000 to War Contingencies and Taxation Reserve, a dividend of 7 per cent. on the Ordinary Stock (making 10 per cent. for the year) plus a cash bonus of 2½ per cent., both subject to tax, and a dividend of 10 per cent. on the Deferred Stock and Shares plus a cash bonus of 2½ per cent., both subject to tax.

No one in industry wants "concessions," but it is surely unwise to permit Excess Profits Tax to bankrupt factories. An example of this possibly happening is to be found in a subsidiary company with an E.P.T. "loss" standard. This "loss" must be paid annually plus 100 per cent. of profits earned, even if it bankrupts the subsidiary. No one can be expected to finance a company whose assets are being arbitrarily commandeered. This result and other penalising effects of the Act call for the attention of the Government.

The Chairman concluded by emphasising the need for more and more production, without which men in the field or on the water, however brave, could not win the war.

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PURELY PERSONAL

TO RELIEVE THE PAPER SHORTAGE notice is hereby given that Theodore Obaldeston Shuffletouperhaft wishes to change his name to Joe Mee. His pronounced preference for King Six 8*d*. Cigars remains unaltered.

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Men and women who wish to prepare for post-war opportunities should obtain the London University B.Sc. Econ. degree. It is no only a valuable qualification for teaching or administrative posts under Education authorities, but also for statistical research and welfare work in commerce and industry. The degree is open to all. You may prepare for it at home under the experienced guidance of Wolsey Hall, and tuition fees may be spread over the period of the Course. 324 Wolsey Hall students passed London B.Sc. Econ. (External) exams., 1925-41. **Prospectus, price 3d., from C. D. Parker, M.A., LL.D., Director of Studies, Dept. VH17,**

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